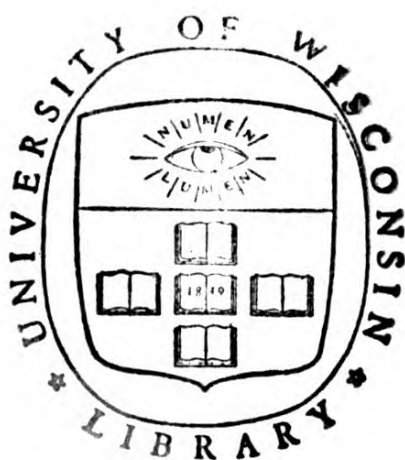


# OUT OF BOUNDS

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LOUISE E. EDGAR









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BY  
LOUISE E. EDGAR

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# OUT OF BOUNDS





## CAPE SUDEST

"How am I ever going to go down that rope ladder?" I asked myself as I realized the ship was anchoring in the stream instead of docking. Although I had gone "over the top" in basic and overseas training, the thought of a cargo net or ladder petrified me.

I glanced through a port hole. Women were dangling back and forth, cautiously stepping from one catlin to another, finally jumping into the duck below.

"Come on, private," someone yelled. "On the double! You are holding up the parade."

There was no time to hesitate. Out I went hanging onto the rope for dear life, expecting to be dashed into the sea at any minute.

Once in the duck, the silly phobia that had consumed my whole being left instantly.

When the amphibious craft was loaded, a GI and two MPs took charge of us, and in a second or two we were shooting through the water towards the mainland.

We saw many black-skinned, fuzzy-haired natives on land. Many of them were quite fierce looking, and when they stared at us, several of the girls became frightened. Then there were cries of, "Why did I ever join the army! I want to go home!"



"Aw, pipe down," barked a WAC sergeant. "There's a war on, don'tcha know?"

I looked at her. In spite of the seemingly brave words she was spurting forth with great gusto, she didn't look any too happy. I was amused.

We banged along over a narrow, rough road for quite some time before we espied an enclosure constructed of tall boards, topped with barbed wire. This, we knew without asking, was our New Guinea home.

The barracks looked mighty good to us after living on board a crowded ship for twenty-two days, and it didn't take us long to jump to the ground and rush inside to pick a cot near a friend. In the confusion and din of voices, I heard someone call my name.

"Here I am," I answered, and before I realized what was happening, I was rushed bodily to one corner near a door, and pushed onto a cot.

"That's your corner," Nora said. And sure enough, that is where I lived and slept for the next ten months.

The barracks were new, a little crude perhaps, but still much better than we ever expected. There were thirty cots lined up, fifteen on either side of the building, with mattress covers and GI blankets on each. Pillows and sheets were nil.

Janie, who had the cot next to mine, picked up her cover. "Well, at least I have something to be buried in," she said, looking rather dejected.

"For heaven's sake, keep still!" squeaked a thin voice from the other side of the barracks. "Gee, whiz, aren't things bad enough without speaking of such a gruesome thing as death!" Just as she

finished speaking, she glanced at the floor near her cot and gasped, "What in the world is that thing!"

Several of the girls rushed over to see what it was.

"My aching back, Mary, that is only a spider of some kind," Kay said very calmly, making sure her two feet were on the cot.

"What do you mean—spider!" retorted Mary shaking like a leaf. "If that is a spider, I'll eat my shirt. I've seen spiders all my life and I never saw one that looked like that."

"Of course it isn't a spider. It's a lobster. I know because I've seen pictures of them," said the WAC from Brooklyn.

"Lobsters are red and are larger than that thing," argued another girl.

Marge heard that statement, and called from her cot at the far end of the barracks, "You're crazy. Lobsters are not always red. I've seen them in the markets and they were a greenish, brown color."

Wanda, a youngster from Florida, was busy trying to open her duffle bag. She wasn't paying any attention to what was going on until one of the girls called her to give her opinion.

"You have lived in the tropics or semi-tropics all your life. You tell us what that animal is," she said.

Wanda mosied over with her hands in her pockets and gave a look at the much discussed creature. With a loud laugh, she drawled in her southern accent, "Don't yuh know a scorpion when yuh see one?"

"SCORPION!" everyone yelled in unison. In a flash, there were shoes, books and anything else

they could grab, flying through the air. Finally someone killed the arachnid.

That episode over, quietness prevailed, but only for a few moments. The sergeant stuck her head in through the open door and shouted, "Watchu doin', havin' a siester? Don't forget you're in the Army. Get your areas in order. In fifteen minutes you WILL fall out in front of the barracks." (WILL is a command in the army.)

"Why don't you fall down?" groaned one of the kids. Lucky for her, the sergeant didn't hear it.

Jane, who was always wanting to do something at the wrong time, started running up and down the length of the barracks crying, "I've got to go! I've got to go!" So on the hunt she went looking for a "Johnny."

In a few minutes she was back, very disgusted and nearly on the verge of tears.

"I know this country isn't safe for white women!" she cried. "MPs are guarding the 'little girls' room.'" Just then the whistle blew. She had to wait "to go."

There was no formation—just a call of ATTENTION and AT EASE, nearly in the same breath, by the sergeant. The CO began, "You are living in a dense jungle." ("As if we didn't know it," I heard some wise kid whisper.)

"You are restricted to the area for the present. You have nothing to fear so long as you obey orders and instructions given to you. Read your bulletin board. You will wear helmets, fatigues, leggings and field shoes until further notice. Use plenty of mosquito repellent after sunset. 'Annie' is 'dying' to meet you. My suggestion is to let her



'die' instead of you." That remark rated a few snickers from the women. (ANNIE was the name given to the Anopheles mosquito by the Armed Forces in the Pacific.) The CO continued, "You will turn in all clothing issued to you in the States. Any questions?"

A cute little blonde raised her hand high in the air. In a low, weak voice she asked, "Mam, do we have to wear the same clothes to dances and parties?"

"Who's going to dances and parties here in the jungles?" the officer asked. "You have come here to work and help get this war over so the men and women can get back home. This is not a winter cruise, you know. DISMISSED," she bellowed.

We were a much disheartened crowd of women. Here we were, living in a country with the temperature at 120 degrees or more, having to wear helmets and all the other heavy paraphernalia issued to us. The thought of it made us wilt. Not only that, but the idea of turning in our uniforms and other clothing we had spent hours packing into our duffle bags, disgusted us. We couldn't figure, in the first place, why the Army ever issued us heavy uniforms and dresses if they knew we weren't going to wear them.

"Oh well, what's the use of griping. Remember how we were told over and over again in basic that the Army always had a reason for everything," Jane said, opening her duffle bag.

"Yeah, well, I should like to know what the reason is for this silly business," Mary answered, slinging a pair of silk panties at her. "We were

told when we left the States, we were going to a temperate climate."

As usual after an episode of this kind, there was much sarcasm and the Army got the "works," but there were always the witty ones who saved the day by their remarks. Before long, everyone was laughing and joking about the whole thing.

Before starting the routine of unpacking, the question of latrines came up again. Several of us left the barracks, on a hunt. It was some hunt. We walked several yards through mud and water before we reached the dignified building we were looking for. It really did look sort of dignified, nestled in a grove of coconut palms with pretty cosmos growing high along the sides of it. And as Janie told us, there was an important-looking MP standing on guard.

"Ain't this sumpin'," the Brooklyn WAC remarked, opening the door. At the sight of the long row of holes, she screamed with laughter. "This is the first time I ever had the pleasure of 'doing my secrets' with thirty women at the same time," she said, picking a place to sit.

"What did she say?" a refined Polish girl asked. No one answered.

The first night in the jungles was a nightmare to most of us. Lights were out at 2130 and down went the mosquito nets, making little tents over each one of us. I know there wasn't a woman sleeping in the barracks that night who didn't shed a little tear and have a great longing for home. In fact, I could hear loud sobbing from one or two of the younger ones. Poor kids, I don't suppose many of them had ever been too far from home until they

joined the army, and to be sent ten thousand miles away was almost too much for them.

That night I learned why I was chosen to sleep in the cot next to the door. Many of the WACs were truly frightened. They would not admit it, but, all the same, they were afraid.

We knew the Japs were not too far away, and that thought, with the stories we had heard about the head-hunters living in that part of the world, gave us much to think about as we lay on our cots in the darkness. And it must have been just those very thoughts, together with the dead stillness about, that caused such hysterical crying and blood-curdling screams in the middle of the night. Not only one barracks was in an uproar, but one by one they all had women crying and screaming, until everyone was sure the person sleeping next to her had been stabbed or attacked by either a Jap or a Fuzzy Wuzzy.

Lights were turned on, and after much search around by the MPs, it was concluded the unusual sight of so many nets, the shapes of the mess kits, together with the clothing hanging against the wall, silhouetted in the bright moonlight, appeared like terrible apparitions to some of the women with overly stretched imaginations.

This same episode happened about three nights in succession and then the captain called a halt. The girls who always started the commotion were located, and told that punishment would result from another occurrence of the performance.

From that time on, there were no more scenes of that kind. We all learned to love the nights, and after "lights out," we lay on our cots watching

the starlit skies and the huge egg-shaped moon that turned the shadowed jungle into a silvery fairyland. We loved to listen to the symphonies of the birds and the noisy chatter of the cockatoos. Once in a while the croak of a tree toad could be heard. Some nights, if we listened very carefully, we could hear the sound of a wild pig breaking through the thick bush outside the tall fence that protected us from everything living in the jungle that might harm us. There seldom were any other sounds on nights like these in the WAC camp, far away from all civilization, and we were not afraid.

No, we were not afraid any more. If the wonderful, quiet nights were marred by some insignificant thing like the sounds made by the rats running overhead, jingling our mess kits as they passed our cots, we paid little attention to it. When the jingling started, the girls would snicker, hurriedly pull their blankets up around them more securely and tuck their nets in more tightly. The next morning some girl would make a silly remark like, "One of those damn rats carried off one of my shoes last night."

No, we weren't even afraid of men now, although we had not been allowed to see any but the MPs, who were stationed every few yards in the area.

One night we had all been asleep for a long time when suddenly I was awakened by a queer sound coming from under the barracks. I wasn't sure whether any of the other women had heard it, so remained quiet. In a few moments I heard it again, and this time one of the girls called out, "Who's there, and what do you want?"



"Just an MP," a voice answered. "Someone reported there was a man under here."

By this time all the women were awake and almost in unison yelled as loudly as they could, "Send him in."

The most refined, dignified woman in the crowd jumped from her cot, reached under her pillow and pulled out a one-pound note. She plunked it down on her cot and pulled her shoulders back as though standing at attention. "I'm first on the list," she said, "to get a look."

We never did see the man.

We didn't do much the first days after our arrival in New Guinea. I guess our officers figured we needed a rest after the long trip over, or, more likely, they needed one.

However, this much needed vacation did not last long. One luscious, warm day while we were all reclining on our cots, we were startled by the shrill sound of the sergeant's whistle.

"Well, here it is. Let's go," said Jane disgustedly.

"Fall out," the sergeant called as she neared the barracks.

"Attention. Line up in alphabetical order," she continued. "The following women will report for detail." She then read the names of four women from a slip of paper she was holding.

"Report to the Orderly Room," she bellowed, and just about in the same breath, "Dismissed."

I looked at the faces of the other three WACs. I nearly "busted my boiler."

At the Orderly Room we picked up brooms, scrub brushes and pails.

"Gosh, what a detail!" exclaimed one of the girls. "I'd like to know who thought of the bright idea of sending WACs to New Guinea," she continued, scrubbing the edge of one of the wooden seats for all she was worth.

"Them's my sentiments, too," chimed in May who looked rather pathetic standing in front of one of the privies, holding a huge scrub brush in one of her tiny hands. "I know one thing, I'm not going to lift any of these filthy buckets. I'm feeling sick already," she said, putting her hands across her mouth.

Just then the sergeant appeared. "The bucket-brigade will come with the honey-wagon and empty the buckets," she said.

"Honey," May repeated, shaking her head.

When we reported back to the Orderly Room, the CO told us we could go to the beach. That was good news, but what were we going to do for bathing suits? What fun was the beach, wearing heavy fatigues?

Jane went straight to her cot when we reached the barracks. She stood in deep thought for a few minutes—then she picked up her mattress cover. "Gee, this would make a swell suit, but suppose I should die over here. What would they bury me in?" She seemed positive she was never going to leave New Guinea alive.

"There you go again, always thinking about dying," said May. "For heaven's sake, what are you worrying about that for, anyway? Suppose you do die, what in heck do you care whether your bones are wrapped in a mattress cover or a burlap bag? You will never know the difference."

"Sure, what's the difference. You'll have a nice wooden kimono before you're put in the ground anyway," the gum-chewing kid from Brooklyn added.

"Yeah, I guess you're right. What difference does it make." She reached into her musette bag and pulled out a pair of scissors.

"Remember, that's GI property," one of the more law-abiding WACs reminded her in a sing-song tone.

"GI PROPERTY!" cried several of the others. "What of it!"

"Well, you know what the ARs say regarding the destruction of Army material."

"That's a laugh after all the waste we have seen in this Army," spoke up Nora who never did talk much.

On and on those girls talked, telling about their beautiful uniforms, their Dobbs hats and other clothing—issued and never worn—being hurled into piles to rot or to be burned.

"If everyone cuts up their covers, nothing much will be done about it, I am sure," one of the kids assured us. Everyone was willing to take the chance, so more scissors were dragged out and everything that could possibly be used for bathing suits was ripped up. It was surprising what creations resulted from the piecing of not only mattress covers but blue flannel pajamas, khaki skirts that had been smuggled away, and even GI blankets that were just a bit heavy, to say the least, for a climate such as we were living in. This was our first opportunity to display any ingenuity we possessed, and believe me, many of the girls were artists when it came to dressmak-

ing. We had no machines, and when we didn't have needles and thread, we used safety pins. As the creations were finished, the girls went to the beach. They were sights to behold in their suits a la New Guinea.

The first week we were restricted to our own private beach and no males were allowed, although there were thousands of troops around—the good old 11th Airborne being one outfit. No matter how hard they tried to crash the gates, they couldn't get past the MPs.

The day did come, however, when restrictions were lifted, and the girls who had made secret contacts over the fence, so to speak, were allowed to have their dates on the beach. As much as the boys tried to be polite, they invariably howled with delight at the bathing suit their WAC was wearing. It wasn't long after this that packages were coming in from the States with American-made beach togs. Some of them were very pretty and in keeping with the gorgeous South Sea Island beach with the coconut palms, the blue, blue sea, and the mountains in the distance.

Our holiday didn't last more than ten days. We were called for interviews and given our assignments. I was told to report to the Radar Section of the Signal Corps. At first I was a little surprised at this assignment, and then I remembered that in civilian life I had taken a course in Radar while waiting to be called to the service.

And so my working days began, and I repeat, working days, because I never worked harder in my life. And here it seems fitting to answer a few of the questions asked by so many people who evidently



weren't interested enough to learn just what the WACs were doing. Those who stayed at home griping about the shortages of butter and eggs. BUTTER! Why we nearly forgot what butter looked and tasted like after having cans of insipid-looking Australian mutton tallow staring us in the face every day at mess time. As for EGGS, well, we didn't see an egg for nearly six months, and then we were allowed just one on Sunday mornings. Yes, how well I remember some "early bird" singing out to us after she had been in the mess hall, "An egg this morning, kids. An egg." She always put the emphasis on the "an." What a scramble there was then to get our HBTs on and grab our mess kits so we could make the mess line and get the "early catch." These early morning races did not last long. The egg wasn't worth it. There was a great difference in a bird going after a worm and a WAC going after an egg. The bird could be choosy and pick a good worm, but a WAC had to take any egg that was handed to her. An egg was just an egg at Cape Sudest. After it was fried, and it always was, in drab mutton tallow, it took on a sickish, pathetic look. The once lovely, golden-blond yolk just faded to a dull, death-like gray. The once soft, velvety white shriveled and shrunk into a hundred wrinkles. I am sure this was not the fault of the cooks; it was just plain old age.

But to get back to the questions, "Were the WACs really needed?" "What did they do to help the war effort?" Then the statement, "No wonder our taxes are so high!" I can only answer for the women who were sent into that steaming, hot, disease-infested jungle of New Guinea. "Yes, they

were needed, and they did a real job." They not only helped to carry on the work in the Service of Supply, they did a very important job by boosting the morale of our troops. They gave parties for them and attended dances with them outside their area. They went to Red Cross entertainments with them—at times they were so tired they could hardly stand on their feet, after working twelve and thirteen hours, and perhaps more. Many of the more talented women worked night after night rehearsing for plays that were given for the boys in the hospitals. Many of those boys died or were killed later as they went forward to the Philippines.

To go on with our work. We were awakened at 0600 by the Post Band which paused long enough in front of the barracks to play, *Roll Out the Barrel*, *Oh How I Hate to Get Up in the Morning*, and several others. This was an ungodly hour to be awakened, but the mornings were so beautiful we didn't seem to mind it too much. And somehow, the music put us in a much better mood than if we had been startled by the notes of a bugle. There were many details to be performed after mess. Latrines had to be cleaned; rec halls had to be cleaned; areas inside and outside had to be cleaned; in fact, everything had to be cleaned before we "fell out" for the march to work at 0700. This march to work also helped to start the day off with a bang. It was truly an inspiring sight to see hundreds of WACs dressed immaculately—wearing trousers and shirts, with hats cocked just at the correct angle—marching as if on parade. The road took us along the edge of the beach where huge, stately palms grew, standing like sentinels at attention as we passed by. As we

approached the Pentagon building, not like the one in Washington I assure you, the men came from their area with heads held high, eyes straight ahead as if they, too, were performing for spectators on the sidelines.

Our office building was a one-story structure with roof and floor. It covered a large piece of ground. From here all requisitions for supplies needed in the Southwest Pacific were sent out. There were numerous sections and each section was headed by a Section Chief.

The work was hard. We worked long hours, sometimes through the night until early morning, seven days a week. We were allowed time off to go to church on Sundays, when men and women of every race and creed worshipped in the charming, quaint, rustic chapel. Time off for mess and a siesta or a swim was limited to two hours at first and then shortened to one in the middle of the day. At 1700 we fell out for retreat, and although it was a very impressive and beautiful sight to see the men and women standing at attention as the flag passed by, waving in the soft breeze, most of us were too tired to feel patriotic about the whole thing. After mess, we were allowed two hours to rest before returning to work. We remained on duty until the Section Chief dismissed us. Those who could type had to be on duty one night each week, and sometimes oftener, until long after midnight or until all urgent and important top-secret cables were out. We learned later, as we went forward and landed on some of the smaller islands, why we had to work so hard and so late at times. We knew when we saw Radar outfits wiped out or damaged badly by Jap bombs, if we had

not done so, equipment would not have reached our boys. Every man and woman who plugged away in that terrific heat with sweat running from their heads and faces onto the papers they were working on, deserves much credit. I salute those who worked in the Service of Supply in the Southwest Pacific.

As our combat troops cleaned the Japs out of the neighboring hills and took more and more of their bases, our work lessened for a while. We were allowed more time off and more restrictions were lifted.

"It's about time there were some changes made in this concentration camp," Janie said one day, standing in front of the bulletin board. "I just wonder where we can go, how we can go, and what will be there when we get there."

"Don'tcha know?" spoke up the pretty, black-haired WAC from Brooklyn who was standing close by. "Just around the corner on Main Street there is a cozy drug store where you can get a great big, fat, chocolate soda."

"Who said that?" Ada asked. "Are you trying to be facetious or do you want to be shot at sunrise? Anyhow, I hate chocolate sodas."

"So do I," Mary said between yawns. "I'm dieting anyhow, and I have just as much fun going to the rat race (the dance at the pavilion) or establishing beachheads (parking on a blanket on the beach with a GI)."

I noticed Marge wasn't saying a word during all this silly talk. There was a broad grin on her face as she sat on her cot sewing. I walked over to her area and asked what she was making from the lovely, colorful material she was working on.



"This, I want you to know, my dear, is going to be a sarong. Joe gave me a lot of tapa cloth."

"Oh boy! You are going to be a regular Dottie Lamour! Where in the deuce are you going to wear it? On the beach?"

"No, that isn't what I am making it for. If you will keep a secret, I'll let you in on one. Now the work has eased up a bit, I'm going to ask for a pass to go off the Post with Joe. He is that good-looking Australian officer you see coming into the office so often. He's really nifty, and has invited me to visit the plantation he is in charge of in a small village not too far away from here. I think it is near Dubodora or Sapotu."

"Gee, Marge, you know what the ARs are. No native villages unless we go in groups under the protection of the guns of the MPs. And what about the 'airborne' germs we have been lectured so much about. You'd hate like the dickens to get some horrible disease here and die, or have to go back to the states, wouldn't you?"

"I'm not afraid of diseases or anything else. If I can get a pass, I am going. If the CO says it is okay, would you like to go along?"

"Sure, I'd love to," I answered, never thinking for one minute that we could go.

Now that Marge had talked to me about going off the Post, I couldn't get it off my mind. I couldn't sleep that night, thinking about it. I also wondered where she was going to wear the sarong.

I heard nothing more from her during the next few days regarding the trip with Joe, and resigned myself to the fact I should never get out from behind the high fence that enclosed the WAC detach-

ment, when Rena, a gay and carefree little spirit, came running into the barracks all excited, after mess one noon.

"Hurry, hurry and get your name on the bulletin board! If you are one of the first fifteen who do, you can go to a native village on Sunday!" she exclaimed, pulling me by my belt to the corner where the board was.

"What's this all about?" I asked.

"The Fuzzy Wuzzies are going to have a celebration. The WACs have been invited. Isn't that wonderful?"

Before I could answer her, she disappeared across the road into her own barracks.

On Sunday morning the girls who were going on the trip pulled their trousers and shirts out from under their blankets. The creases in the pants could not have been any sharper had a tailor pressed them. The blouses didn't look so good although we had been sleeping on them for days and nights. This was the only way we could get any of our clothes pressed. We became accustomed to the bumps.

The huge truck we were going to ride in rolled up in front of the barracks early, with armed MPs standing at either end. It took just a few moments for us to get settled and then we were off on a rough, dusty road. We were so happy to be out and away from camp, seeing new sights, we didn't mind the "thank you marms," nor how dirty we got.

Our first stop was at a small Australian camp where we enjoyed a delicious luncheon. This was our first meeting with the Aussies. They were very gracious and kindly.

When we loaded the truck to continue our journey, several of the Australian boys climbed on with us.

"Are you going with us to the village?" I asked.

"Yes," one youngster answered. "Americans must be accompanied by Australians when they visit the villages, and must have the consent of the Australian official in charge of the village before they can enter. The officer in charge of the particular village you are going to visit expects us, and he suggested that some of us go along with you as escorts. We know the trails through the jungles and we also know the chief of the village."

"Wonderful!" we all cried.

As we rode along, the boys pointed out bombed ammunition dumps and spots where there were still traces of Japanese bunkers. They called attention to the coconut trees, and others that had their beautiful branches and tops shot off and were left there standing, looking frightened and naked. I wondered, as we rode along, what they would tell us if they could speak. Yes, we were traveling over the road our boys had taken, at least some of them, from Oro Bay to Buna where some of these Australian boys had helped hold back the enemy until the Americans arrived. How those boys talked and talked as we listened excitedly to a story set on a stage of jungle and fever-ridden swamp, where our boys lay for days in fox-holes filled with water, or crawled through heavy fire, looking for enemy positions. They told us of the many obstacles they had to encounter. They pointed out the tall kunai grass growing so high that it made it very difficult to see any distance. I shuddered when they told us how they slogged along muddy trails and waded through

streams that were infested with all kinds of bugs, snakes and mosquitoes, making it almost unbearable. I could go on and on telling the stories they told us, but it would take hours. The most important thing is the fact that despite the terrible hardships our troops underwent in that Battle of Buna, they were victorious. The wonderful and gallant Infantry!

After hearing about the Battle of Buna, we were not in a very gay mood, and were glad when we were stopped by some natives, who informed us we would have to ford the stream ahead and that our vehicle would have to be left behind. This turned our thoughts to other things.

Some of us had difficulty crossing the stream, but with the help of the Australian boys and a few natives we made the opposite bank without getting too wet.

On our trek through the tall grass and heavy bush to the village, we passed many of the islanders dressed for the ceremonies. These dark-skinned natives with their "wooly" hair, hooked noses and loose-hanging lips, did not appear to us as a handsome lot, and some of the WACs were a bit timid about passing them.

As we approached the entrance of the village, we were stopped by a guard who said something to one of the Aussies in Motuan. The Aussie was allowed to go into the village. We waited outside until the key official, who was called a *Luluai* (pronounced "loolooeye") was located. While we waited, I watched the guard, who seemed to be taking his job very seriously. I was much interested in knowing what his duties were and how he was chosen for his



post, so I asked one of the Australian boys standing near me.

"The native police are very carefully trained by white officers and are efficient and brave. Many of them have been educated in schools in Australia and New Zealand. They often act as guides and interpreters," he told me.

He also said that there were many different tribes on the island and that each tribe could be recognized by the type of clothing a native was wearing. He told us that the locality of a man's home could be identified by the type of loin cloth he had on, and that of a woman by the cut of her grass skirt or kilt. And he said that their body ornaments, nose plugs, hideous earrings and the manner in which their hair was arranged showed where the natives came from.

As I stood looking from one group to another, Rena called me.

"Quick, come here!" she called.

I rushed to where she was standing, and was much surprised to see a woman nursing a baby at one breast and a tiny pig at the other.

"I'm not getting anywhere just watching this performance without knowing the significance of it all," I said. "I wish I could find a native who could speak English."

Before I finished speaking, a native boy, wearing a pair of shorts, stepped up to us, and, bowing, said, "I speak English. I shall be very happy to tell you anything you want to know."

"Fine," I said. "Now I can feel more at home." At this he laughed aloud.

"First, tell me how you learned to speak English."

"From the missionaries," he answered very proudly. Then he continued, "There is a missionary school and a church here, and many of the natives attend."

"Do you mean that your people, or some of them, believe in the white man's God?" I asked.

"Oh yes," he answered very emphatically, and then said, "Of course some of them still cling a little to their worship of their own tribal gods in addition, because they do not put entire confidence in the Christian God at first."

I found this boy very interesting and intelligent so, before I forgot it, I asked him the reason for the pig nursing at the woman's breast.

"That is a religious rite," he answered, and I asked no more about it. When I moved around through the crowds and saw women and girls with one breast much longer than the other, I knew the reason.

Off in one corner of the village I saw large circles of people being formed. They had the greatest and funniest conglomeration of costumes on I have ever seen in my life. Some of them had on hats made of old bags, newspapers and tree bark. On them were pasted, or pinned with pieces of straw, every type of cigarette ad. There were so many Lucky Strike coverings, one would think every GI in New Guinea smoked Luckies—the natives did prefer the cigarette for they liked the bright red color on the packages. In fact anything, whether paper or cloth, that was brightly colored was stuck somewhere in their hair or on their bodies. They had bracelets and chains made of grass and flowers wound around their arms, legs and necks. Their ears were horrible to

look at, having been pulled sometimes nearly to their shoulders, with sticks of wood or bone stuck through holes made in them. The men looked more grotesque and were dressed more hideously than the women. Their hair was of every color and hue imaginable, made thus by dyes from juices of berries growing in the jungles. Some had used atabrine tablets that had been soaked in water.

After everyone found their place in the circle, the boys and men began beating queer native drums, and then everyone swung into a crazy, weird dance. At the same time, they poured forth chants of uncanny sounds. This went on for quite some time, and then suddenly everyone stopped and remained very quiet.

"Why have they stopped?" I asked my Fuzzy friend.

"You will see in just a moment," he answered. He hardly finished speaking when an old man rushed into the center of the circle and fell flat on his face.

"They are enacting a play, depicting a part of their belief. The old man is supposed to be ill and dying. Let's say for instance he has been hit by one of your vehicles. It is the belief that when a man is ill or dying, bad spirits consume his whole being; in your language it would be the devil."

At this point some of the crowd started to jump around him yelling and screaming.

"Why are they doing that?" I asked.

"Because they think they can call the evil spirits from him. If they can't, they will call the medicine man," he answered.

These antics went on for some minutes, and then a funny-looking dried-up little man, who looked like a pygmy, ran into the ring. He started going

through some queer forms of gymnastics, jumping up and down at times, and at others standing still, stretching his arms in front of him then drawing them back toward him as if trying to pull the devil away from the old man on the ground. He pranced back and forth and from side to side now, hollering and working himself into a frenzy. Finally, slowly—yes, very slowly—the sick man began to move. Screams then went up all over the place, echoing for miles, it seemed, through the jungles. As he grew stronger, gradually getting up on his feet, the lusty shouting grew louder and louder until it was ear-splitting. Just before he took any steps to leave the circle, he turned and looked up at a tree a few yards away. There was a small hut perched high in the branches. Some brush was pushed aside and two little girls came down a crudely constructed ladder and ran onto the field, the medicine man grabbed each by a hand and ran quickly into one of the huts, where he claimed them for his wives. At least that is the way the story went.

As soon as this show ended, orders were given to return to the truck. I thanked my gracious and accommodating New Guinea friend, who said his name was Joe, and started back through the bush.

“Goodness, I am certainly glad I came on this trip, aren’t you?” Rena asked, as she reached to pick a banana.

“I should say I am; I wouldn’t have missed it for the world and this isn’t going to be my last visit to a native village either, if I can help it. Marge has promised to take me with her some time to Dubodora, where her Aussia friend is in charge of a plantation.”



Everyone was a little weary and dirty when we reached the barracks. All we wanted was a shower and our cots.

"Come on," ordered Jane, "let's get a shower while we can. I'll pull while you scrub and then you can do the same for me."

"Okay," I answered, "but let's hurry before I fall asleep on my feet. I'm dog tired."

She pulled on a long cord hanging from a nozzle at the end of a pipe and I scrubbed myself with good old GI soap. Golly! That cool water felt good on my hot, tired body. After I dried myself, I grabbed the string for Jane, but before I had given it a pull a torrential rain started and I was relieved of my duty. There was no roof over us and the tear-drops from heaven washed Janie clean. The minute the other girls heard the rain, they dashed out to get their share of the water before the storm subsided. They stripped, filled their helmets with the lovely soft water, then they began scrubbing and rubbing. What a sight! I laughed so hard I nearly forgot how tired I was.

"Okay, lights out," yelled the barracks sergeant.

"Oh, no!" cried some of the girls who were covered with soap. "Just a few more minutes, p-l-e-a-s-e."

"Nuthin' doin'. Out they go before the CQ sticks her head in here." And out they went.

"I don't know how ya cots feel to y'all," drawled Wanda, "but mine feels better tonight than my grandma's feather bed ever did."

Everyone agreed that things could be a lot worse than they were and that it was a good thing to be

able to appreciate what we had although it wasn't much.

There was quietness for a few minutes and then one of the girls spoke, sounding as if she were half asleep: "The only thing that makes me feel badly about this whole deal is the fact that we won't be home for Thanksgiving or Christmas. Gee, just think how far we are from home. Thanksgiving won't be so bad, but Christmas will be just awful."

"Hush, for goodness' sake," said Nora. "Christmas isn't here yet. Let's get Thanksgiving over first. If we all spoke our thoughts and let our feelings be known, we should all be in the dumps. Thank God you are not in a fox-hole like some of the boys will be, and in fact are, right at this moment. We'll make out some way. Anyhow, the war may be over by then."

Nora was a wonderful woman, a little older than most of the girls. She had a sweet, pretty face and lovely white hair, and I have never known anyone who had such tolerance and great understanding of others. All the women loved her. She wasn't taking the New Guinea climate any too well and I knew it, but she complained very little.

In a few moments every one was quiet again, but it didn't seem any time before we heard, *Happy Birthday to You*, being played by the band outside.

"Holy smoke, I'll be glad when I can sleep as long as I want to in the morning," mumbled Ada. "Gee, if I could only stay in bed until seven o'clock, that would be something. It's nice of the band to play for us, but not so early." Then she turned over for another wink or two.

"Don't you know for whom they are 'specially playing this beautiful morning? It's for you, you ungrateful creature. Remember? It's your birthday. Put on your robe and make a bow at the door in appreciation," said Jane.

"Oh, me, I suppose I'll have to do it, and thanks to you kids who tipped them off that this is my birthday," she answered a little embarrassed as she scuffed to the door yawning.

We all jumped off our cots then and followed her to the door, where she waved to the boys on the truck. Two or three of the girls grabbed her and paddled the living daylights out of her while she yelled at the top of her lungs.

That night the girls in the mess hall had a nice birthday cake on her table. The rest of the meal was the same as usual, damn spam with dehydrated vegetables and powdered milk. They had tried to disguise the meat with slices of pineapple and some kind of gravy, but we had been eating the stuff too long—no matter how they cooked it, whether it was fried, baked, stewed, cut up in salads, or served for corned beef with cabbage, they couldn't fool us. We knew our spam, and gosh how we hated it!

And so another day began as usual and ended as they did for weeks and months to come without many vicissitudes; there was reveille, work, retreat, and perhaps a movie or a dance in the pavillion.

However, now we were allowed to go off the Post on Saturday nights in large groups to parties or dances given by the boys in the various outfits around. On Sundays we could go off the Post in groups of four, but we always had to be armed.

As soon as we were told that good news, Marge came to me one Saturday night and asked me if I should like to go with her to Dubodora the next day, and suggested I invite "Frenchy" to go along, because there had to be two men in the party before we could get passes. I did not need to be coaxed to go on that party, and I immediately called Frenchy on the barracks' phone.

Frenchy was a good Catholic, and just as soon as he returned from the chapel we started off for Dubodora in a jeep filled with canned goods from home and some cold beer.

The road we traveled on after we left NUGSEC was a different one than we took on our first visit to a native village, and our amiable and gracious host, Joe, made it very pleasant by explaining in detail everything we asked about the jungle, as we bumped along that gorgeous day.

It had rained all the night before, and everything we saw growing looked fresh, clean and vigorous after being washed so thoroughly. The land smelled good. The air was luscious; it was cool and clear, so clear we could see the distant Stanley Mountains—dressed in their rich, dark, velvety greens—very distinctly as we passed them. Before when we saw them, it was through clouds of dust that gave them a dirty, grayish tinge and they hadn't looked nearly as beautiful. After passing the mountains, we left the main road and turned into the jungle, riding on a path just wide enough for our jeep to pass. As we went deeper into the bush, I became speechless at what I saw and felt. I had never seen such loveliness. Nature had never appeared so glorious as it was that day, and a feeling of peacefulness and



calmness indescribable engulfed me. I looked up at the lofty, magnificent trees in awe; so monstrous! The many lianas twining and climbing over the trees, with their huge woody, rope-like stems, intrigued me. The purr of our motor was the only sound we could hear. The forest seemed plain dumb, and I had a feeling it might resent our being there.

We had gone some distance into the jungle when Marge asked Joe to stop the jeep.

"Can't we get out and stretch ourselves?" she asked. "My legs have been cramped in the same position so long, I am wondering if I can ever straighten them out again; and I know my poor 'fanny' would like a chagne; it is about paralyzed. Jeeps sure are hard things to ride in for any length of time."

"Sure," answered Joe agreeably. "I think that's a swell idea. I am sure you have all been too polite to complain about the horrible and terrific bobbing up and down you have had to take, riding over this narrow, rough path. I think we shall hear and see more, too, if we shut off the motor," he continued, speaking with a very strong Australian accent.

After stretching, and each drinking a can of beer, we decided to venture further into the jungle on foot. We moved very slowly on the narrow path or aisle we had chosen to walk on, because the vegetation was crowded all around and under us. Most of the time the jungle was dark because of the closeness of the trees and the arches formed over their tops by mosses and vines growing high up on them. Only when there was an opening in those places did we realize there was a blue sky overhead and that the sun was shining. Then we could see the

bright, gaudy blossoms of some of the trees more easily, and the lovely ferns, magnificent mosses, and all kinds of wild plants that covered and draped the fallen trees looked brighter and took on a prettier green. Some looked as if they were studded with jewels because there were still drops of rain on them, glistening in the sun.

Beautiful butterflies fluttered across our path; some were amber color; others black with spots of bright green; some had violet bands and I saw a few yellow ones. The only sounds were those of a few blood-thirsty mosquitoes that buzzed around us, trying their darnedest to puncture some part of our anatomies with their tiny stilettos, or cracking sounds made by us when we stepped on pieces of dry branches. Occasionally we were startled by the thump of a coconut when it hit *terra firma*.

As we made our way deeper and deeper into the jungle, I realized that the day was growing warmer and warmer by the minute. In fact, it was getting hot and steamy. I asked Joe for the time and he said it was about an hour before high noon and time to turn back before Old Sol sent down his brazen, merciless rays on us. Just as he made the suggestion, Marge, trailing along behind us, called out in a low, hoarse whisper. We turned to see what she wanted.

"Quick, come here. I see something up in that tree," she urged, pointing to a high branch.

We tiptoed back to where she was standing and, sure enough, there was a beautiful bird perched high on one of the branches.

"Oh, I am so glad you can see that because it is a bird of paradise!" exclaimed Joe with great delight. "I guess you know how terribly expensive

their feathers are. Once there was a large trade selling them for exorbitant prices, but there is a law prohibiting the killing of them now."

"Gee, can't you get me just one feather?" pleaded Marge, but before Joe could answer her, the gorgeous-colored jungle bird flew away.

"Let's go ahead again for just a short distance," I suggested. "Perhaps we shall see more birds and there may be some animals roaming around."

"We can if you all want to, but the middle of the day is no time to see or hear much in the jungle. Early mornings or early evenings are the best times for that," said Joe.

However, we continued on and had just gone a few yards when we heard a rustling noise in the thick bush ahead. There was no breeze blowing, so we knew it couldn't be the palm fronds moving. We stopped and remained very quiet. I could feel my heart beating like a trip-hammer. My mouth was dry. I was sweating "buckets." I didn't dare look to see how Marge was feeling. She could have fainted; I shouldn't have known. I was stuck as though glued to the spot where I was standing. I heard the click of Frenchy's gun. I heard Joe warn him not to shoot until he knew what he was shooting at. Just then a native appeared and stood before us, stark naked. His body was sleek and black and, much to my surprise, free from ugly sores. His great mop of frizzy hair had been dyed by atabrine tablets, given to him by the GIs in the neighborhood, I suppose. A piece of bone was stuck through his upper lip and when he grinned, showing his black teeth, he looked quite fierce. His long spear was the only thing he had with him.

He stood before us for a second or two, and then, suddenly realizing he wore no loin cloth or covering of any kind, reached and picked a banana leaf. I was amused and wondered who had taken the liberty of changing this man's customs; customs that had been handed down to him over a period of centuries.

Joe was the first to speak. He said something to the native in Motuan and, much to our surprise, the native answered, "Hullo."

"Hullo," Marge and I answered in unison, our voices a little on the trembly side.

The Fuzzy Wuzzy said something else to Joe and then, with a big smile, went on his way.

"What is he doing running around loose?" asked Frenchy.

"Well, after all, this is his country, you know, and there is no law in the jungle that keeps a native from going where he wants to, unless it is on some white man's private plantation or a military installation. He is hunting for his food," answered Joe.

"Gee, I'm glad he didn't decide we should make good eating," laughed Marge as she trudged along.

I knew we should be turning back soon and I wanted to see more of the jungle, so I walked ahead of the others. I had not walked far when I came to a creek. There was a single log with a flat top crossing it, and I was just about to make my way to the other side when a long, narrow head with two large, sleepy-looking eyes appeared out of the water.

I was startled, and when I realized what it was, a shudder ran through my whole body. I stopped walking and remained very still, watching it until Marge and the boys arrived in sight.



There was a terrific splashing and slashing in the water made by the tail of the monster. It frightened Marge. She looked down and saw the crocodile disappear. I looked at her. She was as white as a sheet and I thought she was going to faint, when she let out a loud, terrifying scream that even made me jump. Joe took hold of her and tried to quiet her so he could watch where the creature was going and what it was going to do. The water was muddy and the surface covered with plant life, so we lost sight of it for a while. Then suddenly it appeared climbing up the opposite bank. We knew we were safe now.

Marge was still frightened and was shaking like a leaf when we started back. Suddenly she began to cry.

"Don't cry," pleaded Joe. "That crocodile wouldn't hurt you. It was one of the harmless type. There are monsters living near the mouths of the rivers that are dangerous, but they are far away from here. Come on, now, let's get back to the jeep. I'm smothering in this steaming heat. Soon this place will be a furnace."

Frenchy and I let them go on ahead and we followed some distance behind them. As we walked along, the thought came to me that the jungle was not such a quiet, dumb place after all, but was teeming with life and excitement. Yes, excitement—that was what I was thinking of when I felt something grab at me from overhead. I looked to see what it was and reaching from a limb of a tree to my shirt sleeve was stretched a long, brown creature with a yellow stripe on it. I could see a blood stain where it had hold of me. I screamed and tried to push it

off, but couldn't. When Frenchy saw what it was, he lit a cigarette and touched the lighted end to the leech. The sneaky thing fell to the ground, probably much perturbed because it did not have time to fill up to capacity with my blood. I had no bad results from this encounter, except the fright it gave me.

"Come on, let's get out of this mess in a hurry," Frenchy said, grabbing my arm. "I've lived in fox-holes at Moresby and Milne Bay when the worst fighting was going on and the damned Jap planes were diving at us from overhead, but I kinda took things for granted then. I guess I expected them, but somehow, now that I am a 'swivel-chair commando' and am whole in body and in mind, I'd like to go home that way. These bugs, 'gators, and things crawling underfoot, or grabbing at us from trees give me the heeby jeebys. I haven't said much, but I have a bite on my arm as big as an egg. My God, I'd hate to have malaria again now it is getting so near time to go home."

We were near enough to Marge and Joe now, so that they heard what Frenchy said.

"Cheer up," said Joe. "I'll give you something to put on that bite when we get to the house. Anyhow, I don't think you were bitten by an anopheles. If you have taken your atabrine every day, you'll be okay."

"Did you look to see if the mosquito that bit you was a female and whether she stood on her head when she stabbed you?" laughed Marge, trying to put Frenchy in a more cheerful mood.

There was no answer.

Joe lived in a fascinating, thatched cottage built high on the bank of a beautiful, winding river. When we arrived at the foot of the bank, there were two native boys waiting to carry our luggage up the many steps to the verandah of the small castle; Joe's castle.

We were very tired and hot when we reached the top, and so we rested and drank some good cold water. We didn't even bother to ask where it came from. I am sure it didn't come from a lister bag, because that unmistakable taste of chlorine was missing.

The short rest and cold drink refreshed us in a very few minutes, and then we went inside, where there was just one large room. It was furnished very simply. There was a comfortable looking bed with a huge white mosquito tent over it, two or three chairs made of bamboo, and a table. Hanging at the windows and in the arch between the balcony and the room, there were pretty drapes made of soft, lovely parachute silk. There was no need for more than one inside room, because in New Guinea most people live out in the open until sunset, when mosquitoes make nuisances of themselves. The pests!

Joe spent most of his time on the wide verandah with his intriguing jungle friends, two tiny love birds, a cockatoo, two small monkeys, named Andy and Ann, and a cunning kangaroo.

It was not only comfortable with couches and reclining chairs scattered about, but it was extremely interesting. The walls were covered with curios Joe had collected ever since he entered the jungles to live. The several species of butterflies were beautiful.

The many heads and teeth of animals were grotesque, but fascinating. I enjoyed looking at the native drums, spears and gourds.

Marge was very enthusiastic about everything. She went to the edge of the balcony and looked out over the river. Then she turned to Joe and exclaimed, "My, oh my! If I could have someone to love me as only the characters in Somerset Maugham's stories can love, and live in a place like this for a long time, I should be the happiest person in the world. What a place for lovers!"

I wondered if perhaps there wasn't a love affair in the making between Joe and Marge, and I didn't blame them a bit. She was right; this was a perfect setting for a love scene. It was a place where people should love while they could. Everything around breathed romance. Everywhere I looked I could see it. The tiny birds on the porch sang of it; the cute monkeys, sitting so close together, chattered in their own inimitable way about it; the bees taking nectar from the beautiful flowers in the gardens outside, buzzed it; the flowers themselves breathed it in the fragrant odors they sent out that permeated the air. I was sure the exquisite and gorgeous-colored butterflies were in love because they danced so gaily. Sometimes when they would so cautiously and gracefully swoop down close to us, I felt as though they were trying to whisper that everyone should love. Yes, the very breeze, so mild and soft, seemed to be saying something about love, and I felt out of place. I wanted to leave and let Marge and Joe have this paradise for themselves without talk of commonplace things.



I was lost in my thoughts for a few moments, unaware of Frenchy's nearness to me. I looked up at him. He smiled.

"Happy?" he asked, putting his arms about my waist.

"Yes, very happy, Frenchy. This is one of the most heavenly spots I have ever seen or visited. It would be fun, as Marge said, to live here for a while," I answered.

We looked around for Marge and Joe, but they had left us, so we sat down on a couch from where we could watch the river. There was hardly a sound; quiet and peace were all around us. The river seemed almost still. We didn't speak.

It must have been nearly an hour before we heard a sound from Joe and Marge, and then Joe called, "Come on out into the garden."

My! That was a lovely sight. There were not only many varieties of bright-colored flowers everywhere, but there were several kinds of tropical fruit trees and plants. We picked a papaw and sat down on the ground to eat it. I don't know when I enjoyed eating anything so much. Sitting there, I asked Frenchy about himself and his family. He told me about his pretty wife, his mother who was ill and his brothers. I tried to get him to tell me more about the 32nd Division, the battles he fought in, the exhausting march over the Stanley Range, but he seemed to want to forget all about that interval in his life, and so I didn't press him.

We remained in the garden for a long time. Frenchy and I sat under a papaw tree at one end and Joe and Marge migrated to a spot under a coconut tree at the other. We were making the only

sounds around except those made by some native boys who were swimming close to the opposite shore. We watched them dive and swim in the river for quite some time, and then noticed one of them leave and dash into a small hut close by.

In a few moments he was out again, carrying something high on his head. I called to Joe and asked him what it was.

"Food for us. Watch him now," he answered.

Soon he was in the river slushing his way across to our side.

"Come on, let's go inside," Joe suggested, picking up Marge and giving her a twirl about.

On the verandah we found a table set as nicely and as correctly as any I had ever seen anywhere. Every dish and piece of silver was in its proper place. Marge and I were quite thrilled because we were going to eat from china plates after using mess kits for nearly three months.

When the native boy arrived, he put his heavy tray on a small wooden bench and went below to take off his wet sarong. He looked very sleek when he returned, wearing a bright-colored piece of cotton cloth wrapped around his shiny, dark thighs. He served us as well as any maid at home might have. He couldn't speak English, and I doubt if Joe would have allowed us to say much to the boy anyhow, because the Australians keep the natives very much subdued and treat them only as servants. Joe spoke to him in his own dialect.

The soup was fair. It was made from the meat and bones of some native bird. The curry was a little too spicy for me and the chutney had a strong, pungent taste. The sweet potatoes or taro had been

fried in that awful Australian mutton tallow called butter. Really, the nicest part of the meal was the fruit. I ate a banana, mango and an avacado pear. The coffee served at the end of the meal was the same kind we were having in the mess hall—half chicory. Evidently Marge enjoyed everything, because she cleaned her plate after each course was served. No doubt she would have eaten it anyhow, whether she liked it or not, just because Joe had planned the meal. Love does funny things.

Frenchy suggested giving the Motuan boy who waited on us something in the way of a tip, when we finished eating, but Joe waved his hands saying, "No, please don't do that. We are trying to eliminate the practice of giving gifts to these people, because they have already been spoiled by the Americans. I 'spect we'll have some trouble with them for a while after you leave. I'll give him a cigarette and he will be very happy and satisfied."

That seemed so little in payment for the excellent service he had rendered.

I forgot all about Andy and Ann during the meal, and when we finished eating I asked Joe about them. He said they usually ate with him, but because we were guests, they were served their food outside. We went out to watch them, and lo and behold, there were the darlings. They looked up at us with their bright little eyes, and made queer sounds, if we went too close to them. Then they went right on eating to their hearts' content, from bowls made from coconut shells. It was amusing to see them sit and peel bananas. Their fingers were very nimble and the skins were off and the fruit consumed in a jiffy. Ann loved candy, but Joe never gave her

any unless she danced for him. All he had to do was to show her a piece, and up she got on her hind legs. She hopped first on one foot and then on the other, giving herself a little twirl after each hop. Then Joe would say, "Wiggle," and wiggle she did. She raised her arms up high, and shook her tiny "rear end" until I thought it would fall off. Then she grabbed Andy and whirled him around, much to his disgust and annoyance. When he got too angry and showed his teeth, Ann scampered off and climbed to the top of a tree close by, where she sat blinking her eyes and munching the candy. Then as if she were putting on a show just for our benefit, she wound the tip of her long tail around a limb of the tree and hung there, swinging back and forth. We were just about hysterical laughing at her antics.

"Well, what would you girls like to do next?" asked Joe. "We can either go out in back of the plantation and catch butterflies, or we can go to a village and get some fruit to take back to the barracks. I have pineapples, mangoes, papayas and breadfruit, but my bananas are poor and the coconuts are not ripe enough."

"What's keeping us! Let's go! I've never been to a native village!" exclaimed Marge.

In a few moments we were off to a hamlet just a short distance away. Before we could enter, Joe had to get permission from the chief. He knew Joe, and when he saw him he yelled something in his own language, and instantly swarms of natives, young and old, came running to greet us. Joe could speak in any dialect, and after explaining to the native what we had come for, he smiled and turned to a couple of youngsters standing close by, ordering



them to get bananas and coconuts. I presume that is what he said, because those kids were climbing the tallest coconut trees in the village, before he finished speaking. It was a show to watch those children climb. They looked like little monkeys as they went to the tops. The only difference in the manner they climbed was that the boys tied ends of a piece of rope to their ankles, leaving a little slack. They carried large knives to hack the coconuts loose. The monkeys had a way of twisting them with their hands to make them fall.

When the nuts fell to the ground, the smaller children clambered to gather them and then carried them to the jeep, where they piled them on the ground. When they finished that detail, they gathered bananas and carefully put them on top of the coconuts. In appreciation for all this, Marge and I distributed chocolate bars and gum and Frenchy gave them some cigarettes. Then Joe put as many youngsters as he could into the jeep and drove around the village, dodging trees and huts in snake-like fashion. I never heard such screaming and such hilarious laughter in my life.

While Joe was doing his good deed for the day, Marge, Frenchy and I walked about the village and visited with some of the natives. Very few of them could speak English, and those who could knew only a few words. During our walk we met a crinkly, shrivelled, dried-up little old man who looked at least a hundred years old. His frame was reduced to a skeleton, covered with skin that looked like parchment. He wore only a narrow G string of some sort that certainly wasn't any use for the purpose it was worn. He dragged himself past us with all



the effort he could muster forth. I noticed his eyes especially. They were dull and stary like those of an ill person. But it wasn't because of emaciation I was concerned. It was the red stuff I saw coming from the corners of his mouth, that looked like blood. When I asked any of the natives about him, they simply laughed at me and said nothing.

When Joe finished giving the youngsters thrills, I ran to tell him about the old man, and what I had seen coming from his mouth. He laughed, just as the natives did.

"Don't be silly. That man isn't sick. He has been chewing betel nuts. Come with me and I'll show you how it is done," he said, leading the way to another part of the village.

We followed him to a corner where an old man was sitting under a palm tree. He looked just about as old as the one we had seen just a short time before. There was a small receptacle, made from a gourd, on the ground in front of him. This contained a white powder which Joe said was lime. In his hand he held a small leaf he smeared with the stuff. On this he rubbed a bit of brownish paste, and then on that he laid a tiny piece of a nut. Then he carefully folded the leaf around its contents, making a quid, which he put into his mouth and began to chew. We watched him until tiny streams of red started running from the corners of his mouth. He started spitting in every direction and we moved away. It was revolting, and still it was fascinating to watch him grow more and more stupefied. Joe said sometimes a man stayed in that condition for days and days—yes, even weeks.

"How disgusting!" exclaimed Marge. "And to think he is such an old man!"

"I don't know that it is so disgusting. It is an old, old custom just as smoking or chewing tobacco is a custom in your country, and opium smoking was once the custom of the Chinese, and is now in some parts of China. Just as those habits are essential to some people of other countries, so betel-nut chewing is essential to some of these people. And don't think this man is old. He isn't a day over thirty-five. That is just about the age limit here in this part of the world," said Joe as we walked away from the little man, who didn't give a "hoot" how old he was, or who he was.

"How terrible!" exclaimed Marge. "Just think how awful it would be to know one would live to reach only thirty-five and have to look so old!" She gave a little shudder.

"Is betel-nut chewing responsible for the black teeth of most of the natives I have seen?" I asked.

"Yup, it is, and for your information, they think your white teeth are just as crazy and beastly as their black ones seem to you. Custom again is the reason," he answered.

We had just about reached the jeep when Joe called our attention to something else he thought might interest us. There were four men standing in a group. One of them had a needle stuck in his upper lip, close to his nose, which he was pulling back and forth. When he had done this four or five times, he handed the needle to the man standing next to him who repeated the performance. And so the game went on until all four men had completed the uncanny act. Wonder of wonders! This

one even stumped Joe. He just shook his head. He didn't know the answer.

When we reached the jeep, the children were there waiting for Joe to tell them where to put the coconuts and bananas. They punctured the ends of some of the nuts and offered them to us. The delicious milk was refreshing.

"Come on, hop in. We've just about time to go in for a swim if we hurry back to the house," said Joe as he started the motor.

We waved to the friendly, nice people of the small village, and Joe called out something in Motuan as we started back to his castle on the hill. The perfect day was ending. We could see the setting sun sending rays of many colors out over the jungle.

After changing our clothes for swimming, we jumped from the bank into the almost still, placid river. It felt cool at first, but after ducking down under and wetting our whole bodies, we loved it. Yes, we loved everything about this delightful place. It was quiet and peaceful, although now we could hear soft cooing and singing of birds in the brush and, above their notes, chants of natives accompanied by strange-sounding drums in the distance. The jungle seemed slowly coming to life after the silence of the torrid day.

We played around so long, we scarcely noticed darkness was upon us and a full moon was shining. I looked up and saw the sky was paved with stars. Off by itself, the Southern Cross, lying aslant, fascinated me with its brightness, this exquisite night.

"I hate to call a halt to this fun," said Joe, "but it is a long trip back to the WAC barracks, and we have to eat something before we leave."

"Gee, Joe," spoke up Marge, through her arms about his neck, "I hate to go back. Can't I stay here with you tonight?"

He smiled and hugged her tightly.

"I sure should like to have you, funny face, but you know that I can't. I'm in the Australian Army, in case you have forgotten, and if a woman should be found in my hut, think what would happen to me. Perhaps some day you will be able to. And by the way, Marge, you look pretty cute in that sarong." She did, too.

When we reached the house, we took showers and after dressing and getting our belongings together, sat around for a short time, drinking tea and eating cakes. We gave the beer and canned goods we had brought with us to Joe to dispose of as he saw fit.

"Do you know, Joe, until today I never realized what a wonderful country this is. When fighting is going on, no one cares or even thinks about surroundings. There is not time to wonder whether they are beautiful. I've seen more and learned more today than I have all the time I have been over here, thanks to you. Somehow or other there is something about it all that inspires me. And by the way, how about these birds we hear singing? I always thought birds sang only early in the morning." This long speech came from Frenchy, who never said very much.

"Not here, soldier. Sometimes you can hear them all through the night," Joe answered.

Just then we heard a loud rustling noise in the bushes and a sound like heavy tramping.

"What's that?" I asked.



Joe looked over the edge of the balcony and called us. We couldn't make out just what the large, black animal was we were looking at because a cloud had covered the face of the moon and it was inky black below.

"I think it is a wild pig," said Joe, "but keep very quiet and if it is, a native will pass by in a minute."

Sure enough, in a few moments we saw a Fuzzy Wuzzy pushing his way through the bush, carrying a long spear. Joe said something to him in Motuan and he murmured something back as he went on his way, oblivious to anything around.

"Well, nice people, it is later than I thought," Joe said looking at his watch, "so I think we should get going. We'll take the short cut across the river. I'll go ahead and get the jeep and you follow."

In order to get to the mainland this way, we had to get onto some old pontoons taken from a discarded plane. These were attached to a cable that was pulled by a native on the opposite shore, when we gave the signal we were ready. It was exciting and we enjoyed the thrill of zigzagging and twisting from one side to the other, but I thought surely we should be dumped into the river before we landed.

Joe was waiting to help us climb the steep bank on the opposite side, where his jeep was parked, but before we reached it, rain came like a terrific gunburst and drenched us to the skin. The down-pour didn't last more than fifteen or twenty minutes and then the moon was again shining in all its glory, lighting the jungle and making a silvery path for us to ride on. We saw nothing but the trees



and their shadows, unless some poor unfortunate insect flew in our way and was smashed to a mush against our windshield, or a slow moving turtle crossed the road in search of a place to dig a hole to lay her eggs. We saw no huts and we met no natives. There was a dumb mystery about everything. My brain was working overtime wondering where the strange people were and what they did on nights like this. I broke the silence by asking Joe.

"They do not like to be out at night because they fear evil spirits. I shall take you past some of their huts and you will notice that they have no windows or open places in them. They do have doors, but they keep them tightly closed nights to keep the spirits from getting at them while they are asleep."

Sure enough, when we passed them, everything was closed up securely, but from within we could hear them singing strange music, laughing as they sang.

"I didn't see many women today. In fact, I haven't seen many all the time I have been in New Guinea. Where do they fit in this picture?" asked Frenchy.

"The women do most of the work," Joe answered. "A man buys a wife and is usually concerned most with getting a clean, strong, healthy girl who can work hard. She takes care of the garden and the house, makes the cloth for their clothes, and when the family moves, she carries all the family possessions on her head and back. In the good old days a wife didn't cost too much. She was worth a pig or two, or a certain amount of native tobacco. Sometimes if a man had a house built and a garden planted, he could get the young lady of his choice,

if the head man of the village thought he was a good steady man who would be a decent, faithful husband and father. After the war started, things changed. The Americans had money and it didn't take the Fuzzies long to learn the meaning and value of 'foldin' dough.' Not only did they set high prices on their drums, tapa cloth, headdresses and everything else they possessed, they started an inflation in the wife market. Where once a man could get a good wife for one pig, now he has to pay ten pounds."

All the information Joe was imparting to us not only amused us, but it interested us, and before we knew it we were back in NUGSEC.

Joe left us to go back to Dubodora and Frenchy went to his area immediately.

"Let's not say anything about our trip today," Marge said on our way to the barracks. "I'm not positive, but I think we have been out of bounds."

"Good Heavens! Do you think so?" I asked, somewhat surprised she didn't know that we would be, before we started out.

When we entered the barracks there were several girls around Nora's cot.

"What's the matter, Nora?" Marge asked.

"Oh, I don't know. I went on sick call today and the doctor said I had a case of impetigo and also some jungle rot. I am going to the hospital tomorrow and how I hate to go to that awful place! It is bad enough to have to live in a barracks when one is well, but to be sick in one is worse. The hospital is nothing but a barracks built in a muddy, mosquito-infested clearing. I've been there to visit several of the girls and I know what it is like. Not

only that," she went on, "it breaks my heart to hear girls like Elsa screaming and yelling their heads off, absolutely mad. There is no need of it all and I think it is a disgrace to have conditions as they are. You know Elsa wasn't giving any military secret away when she said some of the privates could do a better job than some of the brass. Of course she was referring in that particular instance to the colonel she was working for, the poor sap. If she had been an officer, and goodness knows she would have made a fine one with her background and understanding of other people, nothing would have been done about it."

Nora was getting very excited, but we let her talk.

"Just think of the days Elsa did KP. You know that was against all ARs anyhow. Golly, I knew when I saw her sitting on the steps of the mess hall, just before they took her away, she would crack up. It was a beastly hot day and her blouse was soaking wet with perspiration. She was exhausted but didn't complain. All she said to me was, 'It will be over soon. Only a few more days of this.' I'll never forget how she tried to quiet the girls, when they wanted to mob the cooks because they went on that strike. She kept saying over and over again, 'Remember, girls, there are always two sides to every story,' but they ignored her and went right on singing that darned *Prisoners Song* at the top of their lungs."

I watched Nora very carefully all the time she talked. She never had spoken like this all the time I had known her. In fact she had seemed quite happy in the army until now. When she turned to reach for

her glasses, I noticed that her back was covered with spots. They looked like large blisters. I asked her how she happened to have so many before going on sick call.

"I didn't pay much attention to the first few I had. They itched some before they came to a head, and then after they broke I thought that would be the end of them. Instead, they spread all over my body. Take it from me, girls, if you find just one, go on sick call because when you get in my condition it is hellish."

"Holy Moses!" I thought, "I have some right now on my stomach." I really was frightened, and called Marge aside to show them to her.

"Don't worry," she said, "I have plenty of them too, but I haven't said anything to you about them. If you will keep quiet, I'll give you a lotion that Joe gave me a few weeks ago. It is used on the natives for skin infections and it has helped me. Of course you know what will happen to us if the secret gets out."

We plastered the stuff all over us when the other girls were out of the barracks. We both dreaded the thought of going to the hospital. It really did the trick, and when the doctor made his Saturday morning inspection, he passed us as okay.

There was nothing very interesting happening in camp any more. Native villages didn't intrigue us and we stayed close to our area. None of us felt any too well, anyway. We had been living too long in the heat of New Guinea and it was beginning to sap our strength and vitality.

The only person I knew who did seem to feel up to par, and who managed to get out once in a while,



was Marge. How she did it, I didn't know until she came to my cot long after bed-check one night. She worked nights; so no check was ever made of her.

"Are you asleep?" she asked, lifting one side of my mosquito net.

"No, not now. Why, what's the matter?" I asked somewhat perturbed at being awakened.

She sat down on the edge of my cot and whispered very softly.

"Gee, I nearly got in a mess tonight. Joe came down with the truck and wanted me to go back to Dubodora with him. I was supposed to work until 2400, but the sergeant said he would work for me if I wanted to go outside and talk with Joe. I put on my raincoat and sneaked under the fence. Joe stepped on the accelerator but the darned thing wouldn't budge. No matter what he tried, he couldn't get the thing going. I was frightened and decided to get back into the area somehow, but I couldn't because there was an MP coming towards the truck."

She stopped talking for a second or two. I could tell she was nervous and frightened.

"Well, go on, what happened then?" I asked.

"Joe told me to get down on the floor of the vehicle and to keep quiet. He put a poncho over me. Hell's fire, I was scared to death. I nearly sneezed once, but smothered it. Then I had all I could do to keep from crying. The MP fooled around the motor, and then suggested that Joe let him get in and try his luck with the accelerator. By that time I was actually shaking. Joe fidgeted around in his seat, pressed like hell on something, and, thank goodness, the engine started up."



"Then what did you do?" I asked her, half asleep.

"After the MP went back to the gate, we drove a short distance, far enough so that he couldn't see us. I threw the poncho off, kissed Joe, jumped off the truck, and crawled under the fence back into the area."

"Well, what are you worrying about? Everything is okay, isn't it?"

"It is if that MP didn't know I was in the truck, or see me get off it and report me," she said still frightened.

"Oh, don't be silly. No one saw you and nothing is going to happen to you. Get into bed, and don't try that stunt again, because you may get caught the next time," I assured her, as she got up and tucked my net in around me.

She was a swell kid, but she was so in love with that Australian she would do anything to be with him.

It could not have been as late as I thought because I could hear the radio at the other end of the barracks. Several of the girls were awake, listening to the news of the war. We were always straining our ears for those reports. We never did hear much about the battles being fought in the Pacific, but European news came in pretty fair. Perhaps it was because we were too near the front lines. However, this particular night we heard a woman's voice broadcasting from Japan.

"This is Tokyo calling the WACs in New Guinea. Welcome to Oro Bay and Cape Sudest, but don't get too comfortable and too happy in your new homes, because you are going to have a visit from some of

our planes in a day or so. Weren't you foolish girls to leave your lovely homes, where you should have waited for your husbands and sweethearts when they return; that is, if they ever do. You'll be sorry you ever joined the army. Watch out for us. Good-night."

We were struck dumb. No one knew whether to laugh or cry. "Maybe this is the real thing! Perhaps the Japs are coming over to bomb us! Maybe we won't be home for any more Thanksgiving or Christmas holidays!" I thought.

"What a spot to be in," said Jane. "There isn't any place to run to, if they do come over. If we go into the jungles, the wild animals or head-hunters will get us, and it will do us no good to run to the ocean because there are no ships at Cape Sudest. I'm really afraid," and with the last remark, she started to cry, waking the women who were still asleep.

"I'd like to know how that dame knows just where we are anyhow," spoke up the youngster from New York.

"Yes, that's what I can't figure out," chimed in Jane still crying. "It sure beats the hell out of me."

Then she jumped off her cot and went to her foot locker and opened it. She fished around inside for something, with the aid of her flashlight.

"What are you doing?" I finally asked her.

"Getting my dog tags. Suppose we should be captured. Gee, I hope you remember what to do if you are taken prisoner. Just give your name, your grade and your army serial number. Don't say another word. Oh dear, we're supposed to destroy all our personal letters, too," she continued, picking up a

packet tied with blue ribbon and holding it close to her lips, "but I just hate to burn these from Jack."

"Don't be in too much of a hurry. Keep them for another day or two. We'll hear the planes coming before they reach us, and then you'll have plenty of time to get rid of them," I said trying to make her think I wasn't worried, when all the time I was just as petrified as she was.

"The damn stinkers," she said closing her locker. Then, as though she had been stunned, she stood straight up and with tears still streaming down her pretty cheeks, she exclaimed, "Oh, why did I ever cut up my mattress cover!"

"For goodness sakes, why don't y'all go to sleep and keep quiet for a change. I'm tired," drawled Wanda who didn't have the slightest idea what was going on. She had been asleep and snoring her head off during the whole broadcast.

Just then there was a bang on the roof of the barracks and she and all the rest of us jumped out of our cots and dropped prone to the floor.

"Wow! She fooled us! They came sooner than she said they would," whispered Jane. "I knew it would be like this. She was right! We should have stayed home where we belonged!" and she began to cry again.

"Shut up, Jane, you make us all nervous," called Wanda in a loud whisper from under her cot.

"Listen to who's talking. I thought you were tired and wanted to sleep. Don't tell us that you would let a little thing like a bomb frighten you," spoke up little Miss Brooklyn with much sarcasm.

"Shush, this is no time for arguments. You should be saying your prayers," said Jane.

Everything was quiet and no one said anything for a few moments, and then, hearing nothing more, we got up on our feet. A couple of the more courageous ones cautiously walked to the open door and peered out.

"I can't see anything but a lot of fireflies flitting about, and all the other barracks are quiet and in darkness," one of them said softly.

"Yes, that's right. The only sounds around here are those coming from the jungle across the road, made by the birds and the tree toads," another said. "Oh, yes, I can see a few bats flying about in the moonlight." Then she continued, "Do you know what I think? I'll bet you anything that noise we heard was made by a coconut that dropped from one of those tall trees outside the barracks. If someone will go outside with me, I'll look around. Who'll volunteer? Gosh! It's a glorious night!"

"Are you kiddin'? Anyhow, there's too many mosquitoes outside and I don't want to shake any more. I've done my share tonight. Come on now and get to bed," suggested someone from the far end of the barracks.

We were all much relieved when we realized that perhaps it was a coconut that hit the roof. We were also very exhausted from the fright we experienced, and so crawled in under our nets.

I was nearly asleep when I heard Jane talking again.

"There is one thing sure," she said, "I know there are plenty of Radar outfits hidden all along the beach, and it isn't far to Oro Bay where there are plenty of ships in the harbor. So I am going to



sleep and not worry about Rosie, Pansy, or those damn Japs. *Buenos Noches.*"

The main topic under discussion the next day, no matter where we were, was Tokyo and the coconut. The most conspicuous articles worn were our dog tags.

That was the last excitement we had for a long time, and as time went on, many of the girls became bored. The men they had met at parties or in their offices were moving up nearer the front, and life was dull for the girls they left behind. They tired of the beach and one by one several "cracked up."

I'll never forget Eva, a young Polish girl. She was just twenty-one and as sweet and innocent as she could be. Every night she waited for me to tuck her mosquito net around her and spray under her cot before she settled down for the night.

"It makes me feel good having you do this for me," she said one night. "I miss my mother just awful at bedtime, because she always sat on the edge of my bed at home and talked with me before I went to sleep."

I patted her on the head. "Go to sleep, now, and some day soon you will be home again."

One night after I talked to her as usual, I put the lights out in the barracks because it was long after "lights out." Some of the girls were feeling gay because it was beer-ration day. I was very tired and asked them to be a little more quiet. To this day I have never figured out what prompted Eva to say, "Shut up, you son-of-a-bitch! Why don't you mind your own business!"

Everyone in the barracks stopped talking. You could have heard a pin drop. I sat straight up on



my cot. I couldn't believe what I heard. I was shocked.

"What do you mean, Eva?" I asked.

"You heard me the first time," she answered. "Shut up! Do you hear me, shut up!" Then she started to cry hysterically.

I jumped off my cot, grabbed my flashlight and went over to her, but nothing I could say or do seemed to help quiet her. I called the CQ who in turn called the first sergeant and in some manner they managed to get her to the dispensary where the nurse gave her something to calm her. After a month in the hospital she was well and back to her own sweet self again, but she never mentioned a thing about the night she turned on me like a little wild cat, and I never did either.

And so it went, day after day. If the jungle or the confinement in camp didn't cause some of the women to break down, the heat and work did. However, there was only one WAC who died at Cape Sudest and that to me was quite remarkable.

Somehow or other after her death the girls felt a little bitter about everything. Many of them felt that the doctors did not know just how to cope with tropical diseases that were so prevalent in the jungle, and that they should have been trained more thoroughly before they were sent overseas.

Thanksgiving came and went as just another day in the Army. The dinner was good and the cooks worked hard to prepare it, but if you have ever eaten all your food on one plate or, worse still, in a mess kit, you know that gravy on pie or cake isn't too appetizing.

During December the men and women rehearsed for a show to be held at Christmas time for the personnel in the area and for the boys in the hospitals in other areas. There were parties as usual, but without much change, because there was nothing in the jungle to change anything. Some of the barracks looked more Christmasy than others because some of the more clever and artistic women worked hard cutting stars, stockings and Santa Clauses out of paper and then coloring them with lip-stick or rouge. One girl received some cotton from home and she pulled tiny pieces of it and stuck them all over the screens in her barracks, trying her best to make them look like snow. Most of our packages were kept until Christmas morning, in the Orderly Room, and then given to us. We all did our best to appear happy, but still there was an air of sadness everywhere in the area. It just wasn't Christmas to us, that was all.

There were times after the holidays when we had little work to do and then again we were very busy, but as time went on boredom increased and the monotony was almost unbearable. Every day was the same and the jungle was beginning to lose some of its enchantment. All we wished for was the end of the war so that we could go home.

It was getting along in the year and news of the war wasn't too good at the time. We were still working hard day and night. One night we had all been working particularly late and were very tired. As we neared the barracks I heard "Mail Call" by the sergeant. I guess she thought it would help our morale if she gave us our mail that night instead of waiting until the next noon. I'll never forget

that night as long as I live. I reached up over the heads of the girls when my name was called, anxious to learn whom my letter was from, but to my surprise I was handed a telegram. I felt weak all over and hated to open it. I was actually afraid to read what might be in it.

Maybe Donald has been killed, I thought. If he has been, I don't think I can take it.

I walked over to where a light was shining, leaned against a coconut tree for support and opened the envelope. It read, "Dad passed away last night." This message was nearly two weeks old. I was shocked! I couldn't believe it. Why, just the day before, I had received a card from him saying that he was well and was sending me a package. I walked in a daze back to the barracks and crawled in under my net without saying a word to anyone. My heart was broken. He had not only been a father, but a friend and a pal as well.

In April came the news of President Roosevelt's death, which was a great shock to all of us, and in May we heard a broadcast saying that the war in Europe was over.

There was much excitement in camp when this last news reached us and now we felt that the end in the Pacific wouldn't be far off. In fact we were sure of it after listening to the stories told to us by our American men about the weaknesses of the Japs. If they were so positive that they were going to get the war in the Pacific over in a hurry, we had faith enough in their belief to know that they were going to do just that; and so when we were called to meetings and were told that we must work harder than ever before because there still was a big fight ahead,

we put all the mental and physical strength we had in our work and resolved to do so until the Japs were defeated. We cut out our griping and our morale jumped from sub zero to a new high.

Not long after VE day there were rumors flying around that WACs were needed in the Philippines. Some of us were excited about these LRs and figured that if we had to see the war through to a finish, we might as well move on if there were any opportunities to do so.

I asked my Section Chief if he had heard the LRs, and he, like a good officer, said that he had heard nothing. I figured that he wouldn't tell me anyhow. The directive would have to be on his desk, making the rumors official, before he would say anything about them. However, he did tell me that just as soon as he was sure WACs could go to Manila, he would release me.

About two weeks after this he called me for an interview.

"A cable has come in asking for two women who have a knowledge of medical terminology to take assignments in the Surgeons' Office in Manila. If you are selected to go, would you like to take the assignment?" he asked.

"Yes, sir!" I answered emphatically.

He told me to keep mum about it until he knew whether I should qualify.

That was a hard order to carry out. Being a woman, I wanted to tell everyone I met in the area, and especially the women in the barracks.

Finally I could talk. The news was out. An Armenian girl and I had been picked to go ahead



to Manila, and believe me, it had been a long, long time since I had been so happy.

No date was set for our departure, but then no one in the Army ever knows until a few hours before they are leaving that they are actually "going places." I spent the next few days packing, so I should be ready to leave at a moment's notice.

I happened to be on the beach with Frenchy the night my orders came in, so I knew nothing about them until I returned to the barracks just before bed-check.

Every girl was in bed when I tiptoed through the barracks, but they were awake waiting to tell me the news. Jane was the first to speak.

"Hey, you lucky devil," she said, sitting up on her cot, "the sergeant came through about an hour ago with your orders for Manila. You've got to be ready by 0400 in the morning to leave for the airstrip."

"Really! Is that the truth or are you kidding me?" I asked, hurriedly pulling off my clothes before the CQ made her appearance.

I just about made it when the beam of her flashlight shone on the door and she came in.

"I suppose you've heard the news," she said, coming over to my cot. "Be sure and be outside at 0400 with duffle bag, musette bag, cartridge belt and canteen. Have water in your canteen."

"Gosh, I guess it's true. Good-bye, all you swell, wonderful WACs," I said, trying my darndest to appear cheerful. "You will all be asleep when I check out. I'll write to you when I get to the beautiful Philippine Islands!"



Somehow or other, I wondered if I really was happy about leaving New Guinea. I thought, maybe the anticipation was much nicer than the actual leaving. Talking about it, and having orders to do it, were two different things. After living ten months in New Guinea, I was beginning to think of it as home, and now that I had to leave I wasn't so sure that I wanted to go.

Regardless of the hardships we had to encounter in the jungles, it was pleasant living there away from noise, confusion, and troubles of life elsewhere in the world. It was nice living with the many grand WACs far away in that part of the world where few, if any, white women ever lived, and I knew that I should miss them all. I hated to leave Janie who was so pretty, young and refreshing; I knew I should miss Anna, who sang to us when we felt lonely, sometimes a new popular song—at least it would be new to us—but best of all, *Ave Maria*. There would be no more love stories from Marge. Memories of the glorious mornings when Carol, Jane, Cora and some of the other girls tiptoed out of the barracks, just as the sun was coming up, for a swim in the beautiful Pacific Ocean—at least until some MP spied us—would linger with me always. I'd never forget the kids at the far end of the barracks, who were so full of fun and wit, Della, Mary, and the others. I thought of the nights I had spent on the lovely beach under the stars and moonlight, speaking bad French and trying to teach Frenchy good English, and felt sure there would be many times I would long for those nights. And then, just as I was about to fall asleep, I heard a noise of some sort coming from the jungle, and I realized that I was going to miss

the sounds of the animals and the songs of the many beautiful birds living in their mysterious home. I wondered about the interesting natives I had met who were living happy, busy lives, and asked myself what right we had to interfere with their way of life.

How do we know, I thought, whether their belief is wrong or right and who are we to tell them? I wondered if even the missionaries had the right to try to "civilize" them, as we use the word. They had lived as they were doing for centuries and were content. What more can be asked in life? Contentment is really the essence of happiness.

After all this thinking and pondering, I felt satisfied that these people should be left alone to live their own lives to suit themselves, and I had great doubt in my mind whether the white man's so-called progress would make them happier or any better off. I had a feeling that although these natives had a certain curiosity about the white people, they were a little glad to have us leave and, like birds in a nest, disliked being disturbed. They belonged in the jungle. They were put there for that very reason and knew nothing about the outside world.

All this time, I hadn't slept. I looked at my watch and found it was already time to get up and dress.

On my way to the latrine, I asked the MP on duty if he would get word to Frenchy that I was leaving and would like him to meet me at the mess hall for our last cup of coffee together in that part of the world. How I hated this parting.

The airstrip at Dobodura was not much of an airfield and the planes taking off from there were not too frisky looking. We were weighed in without

much commotion and everyone seemed a little strained. Flying in the jungles didn't have much glamour attached to it. But there was a funny fellow there, as is often the case in times like these, who helped relieve the tension of everyone. He dragged his duffle bag on to the scales when his turn came to be weighed in, turning his head at the same time, as if he knew something was going to be said to him. The officer in charge of the weighing looked at the indicator and bellowed forth, "Get rid of some of that junk, Corporal." The corporal, with a big grin on his face, pulled the bag over to a corner and opened it. Out rolled about two dozen cans of beer.

"Well," he said, "there's more'n one way to carry it," and he proceeded to open the cans and pass them around to anyone who happened to be standing near him.

"Hey, it says on this paper that a hangover in the clouds isn't much fun," laughed one of the boys.

"Oh, blowit outcha bariksbag," the corporal said, starting his second can.

I don't know how many he consumed after that because Anna and I walked away, but I do know that he was feeling gay and I felt sure that he wasn't a bit frightened or skeptical about sailing away in one of the dilapidated looking C-47s that was waiting to carry us off into space.

Anna, on the other hand, was a little anxious about boarding the plane. I could tell by the way she looked and by the speed she was chewing her gum.

"How are you feeling about all this, Anna?" I asked.

"Well, to tell you the truth, I'm not feeling too hot about it. I have never flown before, and to be taking off in a junk like this, here in the jungle, doesn't appeal to me."

"Okay," yelled one of the crew. "Line up according to alphabet and rank."

In a few moments we were on the plane, two women and a few GIs. We occupied only one side, because ammunition in boxes painted with bright red paint saying "DANGER" stared at us from the other.

"Put on your safety belts, and keep them on until the plane levels off. No smoking until I tell you that you may do so," cautioned the co-pilot.

And so we looked down as we took off from the land of eternal summer and said, "Hubba, Hubba," for the last time to all New Guinea. I looked at Anna. She was trembling so she couldn't get the straps of her safety belt clasped, and had my handbag all tangled up with it.

"Take it easy, Anna," I said, "nothing is going to happen to us."

"Gee, I'm so afraid," she answered. "I wish I had stayed in New Guinea. Suppose we have to land on the ocean," she continued, trying to get into her mouth the end of the tube that inflated her life jacket.

"Don't blow that up now!" exclaimed the boy next to her. "That is to be done only in case of an emergency."

"Oh, me!" she said half crying. Nothing I said cheered her at all.

I was lost in thought for quite some time, wondering what fate had in store for me. I felt at peace up



so high among the clouds, that were sometimes above us, and then again below, moving slowly and gracefully as sailboats at sea. Sometimes we seemed to be enveloped in one that appeared like a huge burst of steam let loose, wandering about with no definite goal in sight. The drone of the engine was soothing and affected me as an opiate might, causing me to doze every now and then.

Once when I looked up from one of these cat-naps, I noticed Anna was not sitting beside me. I couldn't see her anywhere on the plane. The GI who had been sitting next to her told me she was sitting up in the cockpit with the pilot.

She was back in less than a half hour, her face wreathed in smiles.

"I've had the most wonderful time riding up in the cockpit," she said. "Everything looks different from there and I could see so much more. You should see how the plane sails right along without the pilot touching the controls. Can you imagine that! Isn't automatic control a wonderful invention! Did you see all those things that looked like specks away down below us?" She didn't wait for me to answer. She went right on talking as fast as she could. "I did. The pilot told me that they were ships carrying our boys to the different islands and that there were lots of Japs on the islands. Just think, here we are away up here just as though we were detached from the world, flying over people, animals, land and everything we know about except the stars and the moon, and perhaps at this time of the day we are doing that, I don't know. Anyhow, it's hard to believe that we can walk around in something eight or ten thousand feet in the air, or even



higher for that matter, and just think, I'm not one bit afraid any more."

Just then the ship gave a lurch and several pieces of luggage and other paraphernalia went sprawling on the bottom of the plane. Anne reached for her safety belt, but before she even had it in her hand, the plane did a few gymnastics, first drawing us straight up into the air and then letting us down with a terrific bang.

My innards did a few somersaults, but I managed to swallow enough times so that I didn't need a paper cup. I noticed the corporal leave his bucket seat and make for the far end of the plane with his, but the poor kid didn't make it. I looked at Anna, who had been so happy and unafraid a second or two before, and wondered just what was going to happen to her. She was slowly turning from a pale yellow to a bilious looking green color. I saw her gulp a few times, put her hand to her mouth, and then start doing a job on her gum again. She chewed it so fast and furiously, I expected to see her teeth come flying out of her mouth at any moment. She was blinking her eyes just about as fast as she was chewing.

In a few seconds the plane straightened out and before we realized it, we were making a landing at Finchaven where we refueled and had the plane checked. There was a canteen not far from where we landed where we could get sandwiches and coffee.

Hollandia was our next stop. We were disappointed not to have had time enough at each place to visit the WACs who were stationed there, but the pilot had to make Biak before darkness set in.

## BIAK

There was a WAC detachment at Biak. After checking in and getting our barracks bags, we located a bus that went straight to the WAC area.

Although we were a little weary, we were much impressed with our new surroundings. The thought of living in a tent for a few days intrigued us. When we learned we were in a casual camp, and that we were transients with no detail to perform, we felt like shouting for joy!

There were three other women billeted in the tent, waiting for priorities to go to Manila.

Anna and I picked the cots we wanted and then took showers.

"Let's stay here for a while. What difference does it make whether we get to Manila this week or a week from now. If we keep away from the Orderly Room and don't ask for our priorities to be changed, we won't be able to get reservations for a long time, anyhow. We will probably never come to this part of the world again, and I want to see some of it," Anna suggested, scrubbing herself "a mile a minute."

"It's okay with me," I answered, rather pleased at the idea.

The showers refreshed us, but we were still tired, so, without much more talk, we flopped on our cots and were asleep in a jiffy.

Morning came all too soon. I looked over at Anna to see if she was awake.

"Isn't it wonderful to be able to sleep without nets," she said, sitting up and stretching.

"Gosh, yes! Just think, no mosquitoes here in Biak! And have you noticed how dry this climate is? I haven't seen a speck of mud or muck like that we had to trudge through in New Guinea. I guess it is because this is a coral island. Personally, I think this is a delightful place. Last night, just before I wandered off to dreamland, I looked up at the sky and it was a beautiful sight. Tonight, I am going to move my cot outside and have nothing over me but the glorious heavens for a roof," I said.

Anna got up before I finished speaking and came over to my side of the tent and lifted one of the flaps. She took a deep breath and did a few calisthenics.

"It is a lovely place," she said, "the air is so soft and everything looks so clean and dazzling in the bright sunshine."

She touched the floor with her fingers once more and then started back to her cot.

"Come on, let's go to mess and then start on a tour," she suggested, as she pulled off her pajamas and dragged a clean pair of HBTs from under her blanket.

On our way back from the mess hall we stopped long enough in front of the Orderly Room to read the bulletin board. The very first notice that caught our eyes was one saying that six girls were invited to a Javanese entertainment and dinner to be given by some of the Dutch Navy officials who were in Biak. Only four women had signed the invitation,

so we took a chance and jotted down our names, hoping against hope that we might be fortunate enough to be included in the party, even though we were transients.

After getting a pass from the sergeant, we found our way to the beach. I thought Cape Sudest was the loveliest place I had ever seen or visited, but the beach we were seeing now surpassed anything I ever saw there. On the opposite side of the bay, tall mountains cast their heavy shadows over everything below them. I looked down into the clear water and called Anna's attention to the many-colored fish swimming around gracefully amongst the beautifully colored coral. We saw a few pretty snakes coiled up on the bottom.

"Doesn't look very comfortable for swimming," Anna said, sounding somewhat disappointed. "Some of the girls who have been stationed here told me that one can get severe cuts from the coral."

We sat on the edge of the bank for a long time. There were no sounds except those made by seabirds fluttering overhead or flying close to the water, skimming it without touching it.

Anna startled me when she jumped to her feet exclaiming, "I have an idea! Let's keep our field shoes on and wade out along the edge of the water until we find a spot with a sandy bottom and no coral."

"Swell," I agreed, and in a few minutes we were slushing our way in search of a swimming-pool.

We went quite a distance and at last we found a delightful one hidden away in a cave where orange, green and pink coral hung overhead in every conceivable shape imaginable.

We dived in, shoes and all. It was a glorious sensation, and we were having a gay time, when a queer-looking canoe, with two natives in it, made its appearance a short distance from where we were. I waved to them. They turned and headed in our direction.

"How about this? Do you think we are safe speaking to them?" Anna asked.

Just as she finished speaking, one of the boys called, "Ceegaret, pleeze, Mam?"

"Sure, over there on that rock," I answered, pointing to where they were.

We watched them, curious to know just what they would do. One of them picked up a package that had been opened and took out just one, and held it up for us to see.

"One, Mam, just one. You see?"

"Good Lord! Imagine that native boy, so honest he wants us to know he took just one darn little cigarette. Let's give him the whole pack. A small thing like that gives one a lift and a feeling that there is some goodness and decency in this world, regardless of wars and those who make them."

At 2000, trucks that were going to take us to the Javanese party were outside the detachment. Anna and I spoke to no one for fear we should be told we could not go. Again we were lucky. It so happened the boy in charge of driving us to the village was an Armenian boy, and when he met Anna he was so overjoyed he all but threw us onto the truck.

As we rode along, Leo told us many gruesome and horrible tales of the battles fought in Biak.



He called attention to the mammoth rocky cliffs, where the Japs had built hundreds of caves.

"Here," he said handing me a flashlight, "take this, but hold it close to the lower part of your leg so if a shot is fired by some Jap in hiding, you won't get hurt so badly. Now look up at those cliffs."

I did, but believe me, my knees were shaking. I was getting more frightened every minute.

"From those caves," he said, "those monkeys really mowed our boys down."

"They must be monkeys in order to scale a high place like that," Anna agreed.

I was glad when we reached the village.

The chief greeted us very graciously and escorted us, with two guards, to a dancing pavilion, where there were natives, Dutch officers, and a few Americans gathered. We were first introduced to the chief's family. They couldn't speak a word of English, so Leo acted as translator.

The women I saw and met at that party were the most beautiful I had ever seen in my life. They were the essence of daintiness and femininity in every way. Their costumes were extremely becoming to their type. They were made of lovely soft material that was wound around their exquisite figures and left hanging gracefully to the ground.

There was an orchestra comprised of two ukuleles, one violin, drum and piano.

It was sometime during the early part of the evening, while I was busy talking with a Dutch officer, and not paying much attention to the dancing, that I felt something touch my shoulder. I looked up and peered into the face of a Javanese man. He

bowed, smiled and took a silk handkerchief from my shoulder.

"What does this all mean?" I asked the officer.

"This is the Javanese Love Dance, and he has chosen you for his partner," he answered.

"Good Lord! I can never dance with these tight trousers on! What shall I do!" I exclaimed.

"Get up and be a good sport. Your friend is going to try it."

I looked down the line of women who had been chosen for the dance. Anna was already standing opposite her partner. She gave me a big wink.

The music started. I watched the movements of the native women. They began moving their shoulders, then their arms and hands. Soon their whole bodies were swaying from side to side; their knees bending until they nearly touched the floor. I looked at the beautiful, graceful hands of the Javanese women. Then I glanced at my own short, blunt fingers. I watched Anna's *derrière* and thought of my own. I figured we would both split our pants before the dance finished. Sweat was pouring off her face. It was pouring off mine too. I tried to follow my man. I was stiff and clumsy. I wanted to laugh, but I realized that every movement of head or finger meant something in terms of tradition to these delightful people. The dance ended. I had difficulty straightening up; my knees were still bent and I had to walk to my chair that way. I was embarrassed. Anna was amused.

During intermission, we were served herbs and roots of various kinds, mixed with something that looked like macaroni. Pretty young girls brought us warm beer. It tasted good because the night was

hot, and anything was better than water from a lister bag.

When the dance ended, the natives, including Polynesians, Javanese, Balinese, Idionesians and many others, gathered on the stage at one end of the pavilion, and with the orchestra sang many native songs. They finished singing the Dutch National Anthem, *God Save the King*, and *God Bless America*. It was very impressive. Anna and I were glad we had attended the party.

On our way back to the detachment, Leo told us about his work. He said he spent anywhere from two days to two weeks in the hills looking for Japs.

"Do you go all by yourself, and aren't you frightened to death when you are on such detail?" Anna asked.

"No, not exactly afraid, because I take some of the toughest natives in the place with me, and, believe me, they aren't afraid of anything. Would you like to visit my hideout tomorrow night? I'll introduce you to some of these wild men."

That was going to be exciting!

At 1900 the next evening we met Leo and an American GI, a grand kid from Colorado. We rode for an hour that night before we finally stopped. It was in a secluded spot on the side of a back road in front of a broken-down old building that looked like a barn.

"Here we are again, getting into something we have no business doing," Anna said, folding her hands and looking about.

"That's right, perhaps we should go back to the detachment. I don't like all this blackness around

here," I answered. Then turning to Leo I asked, "Are you sure it is safe for us to be here?"

"Sure, don't be silly. No harm can come to you. The Japs only come down from the hills when they are hungry. Sometimes they eat their own compatriots. I saw one slicing a steak off a leg of another the other day."

"Heavens! That is horrible!" exclaimed Anna. "What do you think about it, Jack?"

"Well," he said slowly, "I've just come out of the jug and I don't want any more trouble, but I guess it's okay. I'd hurry, though, and get off the road before some smart guy comes along. Hide the jeep in the bushes so the lights from passing vehicles won't show it up."

I looked at Anna. She didn't say a word. Her black eyes seemed to be popping right out of her head and her mouth was going up and down just exactly as fast, if not faster, than it did on the plane.

"Come on," Leo said, "and be quiet."

We were quiet all right. It was so still you could hear a pin drop. Nothing was stirring. We reached some rickety, broken-down steps that led down the side of a steep incline to the sea. I felt a little reluctant about going any further and hesitated, wondering what was down in the inky place below. After much persuasion by Leo, I followed him. We had to cross a crudely built bridge before we reached his hideout, which was a small grass hut built on stilts high above the water.

The first room we entered was lighted by a single candle. There wasn't any furniture except a low wooden bench and a stool where a huge, black man, with gobs and gobs of fuzzy hair, sat. He grinned



at us when we entered, displaying two great pointed, black teeth that hung down over his thick lips.

He pointed to the bench, signifying that he wished us to sit on it.

"No thanks," I said, "I think I need some air."

There was a sort of balcony overlooking the bay and we were so glad to be out of that room we actually fell onto an old bench that was standing next to the wall. We were petrified. We sat as close together as we could and at times I was sure I could hear Anna's knees knocking.

Jack didn't say much during all this procedure. I asked him once if he thought anything might happen to us.

"I don't think so, but I know damned well I shouldn't be here. This is off limits in the first place, and if anything should happen to you, think what would happen to me."

"You are a great help," I said, somewhat disgusted.

In a few minutes, Leo was back.

"Be very quiet," he said, "and I'll show you something."

"We don't want to see anything more, Leo, we just want to get out of this hole. Do the Japs know this is your hideout?"

"Don't worry," he replied. "I have enough guards around to protect me."

"Sure, protect you, but how about us? The guards frighten me about as much as the Japs would," Anna said.

I really did want to see what he had to show us, but I didn't know whether I could get up off the



bench. I felt frozen to it. I pinched Anna. She shook her head and, pulling me with her, got up.

We moved toward the door cautiously and quietly, expecting the worst to happen; perhaps we were going to see a Jap crouched in a corner or maybe a lot of them. There was a sound of tramping, bare feet coming toward us, but we couldn't see a thing right then. After a few minutes had elapsed, although they seemed hours, hundreds of natives made their appearance, walking slowly in a long snake-like line, loaded down with all their personal belongings, which were not many, I assure you. Leo told us they had been walking all day, coming from far distant parts of the island where it was unsafe for them, and that they were going to "put up" for the night.

We felt somewhat relieved, but still didn't like the idea of being the only two white women with all these blacks.

Jack suggested to Leo that it was time to leave, but he informed us we couldn't go just then because a meal was being prepared for us.

While we were waiting for the food to be brought on, a few of the men and boys gathered in a corner of the balcony and very softly sang songs to us. They were weird to say the least, and the movements that accompanied them were those of a contortionist. There was one short ditty they composed that interested us very much. They dedicated it to Leo and all "Americanos," thanking them for coming to their islands and freeing them from the Niponese. They sang that ditty over and over again, putting their very hearts and souls into it. Suddenly they stopped. Women and girls were bringing in the

food. They piled the table high with all kinds of strange and rare eatables. I recognized the taro and breadfruit, but the rest of it was new to me. We reneged when it came to eating the berries and roots, and settled for some good old Australian cheese, some American canned fish, and bread that evidently had been stolen or given to them by some GIs. The four black women who had taken places opposite us devoured everything they could reach. Once in a while they stopped long enough to look up at us and smile; several times they laughed aloud. No doubt we looked just as grotesque to them as they did to us.

During the meal, the boys and men who had sung for us sat in their corner, remaining very quiet. I suggested they play and sing something for us. They shook their heads very violently, meaning NO. I learned later it was against their belief to sing while eating was in progress, because of bad spirits that might be hovering around. When the feast was over, they did accommodate us, but only for a short while for it was time to go.

We thanked these nice people for their kindness and hospitality and started over the shaky bridge and up the rickety steps much faster than we ever came down.

What a relief to be out and on our way back to our area.

"I wouldn't have missed it for the world," we repeated over and over again, as we rode along.

The next day we washed our hair. It rained sometime during the night and left water in the flaps of our tent. The sun came out and warmed it. We were having a gay time rinsing each other off, when the sergeant drove up and bellowed:

"The two women going to Manila be ready in fifteen minutes for the airstrip."

"My gosh, that means us!" Anna exclaimed. "I'm not dressed and look at my hair!"

"Dressed or not dressed, hair or no hair, be ready," the sergeant called back, getting into her jeep.

We dashed into the tent, threw our belongings into duffle bags; tied scarfs around our heads, and, believe me, we *were* on that truck in fifteen minutes.

What sights we were! We had put henna on our hair, just for the fun of doing something different, and it was running down our faces, in our ears and down our necks. The more Anna tried to mop it up, the more angry she got, and the more I laughed. I couldn't see myself.

We checked in at the strip, and then sat on our bags to wait for a plane.

"You'll have to admit, this is a unique way to be making an exit out of a country," I said.

Anna didn't answer. She was very quiet. Her face was resting in the palm of one hand. Her eyes were fixed on the ground in front of her.

"What are you thinking of, Anna?" I asked.

She sighed. "Lots of things. I'm getting fed up with this war business. It is getting under my skin. I don't know as I want to see any more beautiful countries that have been bombed, wrecked and disturbed. No matter where we go and no matter how much fun we have, or seem to be having, there is always something to remind us of the terrible things that happened before we came. Leo told me about the terrific bombing here a few nights ago. The theater was the target just as the people were

coming out. And do you know the WACs were alerted just the night before we landed here."

I let her talk. It was good for her. Then I spoke. "Listen here, Anna, don't you blow your top as some of the girls have. You can take it. You have so far in the game. We've been lucky because we have had a few days off. Some of the women in this theater haven't had any time off at all."

"I know that, and I don't suppose there is a thing we can do about conditions as they are. Perhaps when we get back home, the men and women who had a part in this war can get together and show the people how futile and horrible it all is, and get rid of the war mongers and those who like wars for their own personal gains. Still, I suppose it will be just as it has been after every other war. People will forget. They will be too busy to go to the polls to vote, especially the women."

I didn't interrupt her and she continued:

"Do you know that some of the women in my town won't go out if it is raining, or because they have a cake in the oven? Very often the excuse is children. I know this is true because I have gone after them on election day and made them get out, while I stayed with the kids. It took only a few minutes. I get so damned angry sometimes when I think of it. They are the first ones to gripe about the men we have put in office, if things don't go as they think they should. And another thing, very few of the women ever bother to learn anything about the man they check at the polls, if they do vote. They vote for him because Mrs. Jones does or because he seems to be 'such a nice man.' It is about time our people waked up and got wise to themselves. They



are going to be an awful sorry lot some one of these days, because as sure as we are alive today, the tide will turn."

Just as she finished speaking, we heard the sound of motors and a C-47 landed, sending clouds of dust in our direction.

"Gee, I am glad this is a C-47, because the pilot on that first plane told me when the motors of a C-46 get wet, they are apt to 'conk out.' "

She was trying to convince herself she was going to be safer than when we flew in the broken-down wreck we took off in from New Guinea.

It was a grand morning. The air was clear. The ceiling was high, and somehow I felt a little more at ease, starting off.

We made landings on some of the small islands where our Marines and Seabees were stationed. My, how excited they were when they saw women, the first they had seen in years, and WACs were really a curiosity.

At Pelileu, where the Marines fought that terrible battle of Bloody Nose Ridge against 30,000 Japs, the men could hardly believe we were American women landing on that bleak island. They made none of the wise cracks we expected them to make. In fact, they treated us almost with reverence. We spoke to them first, and then they rushed into the canteen ordering cokes and whatever else we wanted. They told us all about the island and wanted to show us the little they did have. What a hell-hole.

We stopped at Samar, in a small Filipino village that had been untouched by the war. The Japs moved out, we were told, after the invasion of Leyte. We stayed there for the night. The Red



Cross did everything they could to make us comfortable. The girls willingly gave up their beds to us, and for the first time in nearly a year, we slept on mattresses with sheets and pillows.

Our plane took off very early the next morning. For the first time, civilians were leaving with us. A Catholic missionary sat down next to me. He came from Mindanao with two Filipino boys, one a pharmacist and the other a doctor. They were going to Manila on orders from General MacArthur. Their mission I did not know and I didn't ask them. They did tell me they had been prisoners of the Japs and told of many horrible atrocities committed by them. The priest, the boys told me, saved many lives by crowding the people into his convent. He was very modest and didn't speak much about himself. He did tell me, however, he was a German and had served in World War I under the Kaiser.

"I was taken prisoner," he said, "and later escaped. When Hitler came into power, I decided to become a missionary, because I did not believe in his regime."

He was a sweet old man.

The boys, on the other hand, wanted to talk and show us what the Japs had done to them. The doctor told us he had been tied by his feet to a cross-pole and left hanging there with his head in a bucket of water, not enough to submerge his whole head, but just enough so he had to keep it moving from side to side to save himself from drowning. He showed us marks on his ankles where wire, they tied him with, had cut deep gashes.

## MANILA

We landed at Nichols Field in Manila around noon. What a contrast landing on a real, honest-to-goodness airfield instead of a clearing in the jungles. What a thrill seeing crowds of people rushing about, some in uniforms and others in civilian clothes.

"It's good to be in a city where there is some life," Anna said. "Do you realize how long it has been since we saw a modern building or a civilian car?"

"Yes, I do. Caroline told me we would love Manila. She lived here before the war, you know. And remember the lectures we had at Cape Sudest by the Commanding Officer, when he said there would be much gaiety and many parties and dances planned for us. I am not particularly interested in all that, but it will be a change to see pretty civilian girls, and to go into attractive restaurants to eat once in a while."

We waited around for nearly an hour before the vehicle arrived that was to take us to our headquarters. It was a truck as usual, but we were tired and didn't much care what we rode in. It was raining and there was much humidity. This we didn't mind so much, but what we saw on that ride from the airfield to our detachment surprised and shocked us. No one had told us the city had been bombed so badly. In fact, we didn't know much about any-

thing going on in the world apart from us. We could hardly speak. We were overcome by the sights we saw.

"So this is what we have been wishing and waiting for all these months; to get to beautiful Manila, only to find a war-torn city, dirty and sordid with mud, debris and filth, everywhere!" I mumbled to Anna.

She didn't say anything.

No matter where we looked we saw civilians poorly dressed, and some of the children without any clothes on at all. They were starved and emaciated looking. We saw very few buildings intact, and those that were, were toppling over.

"Are you glad you left the jungles for this, Anna?" I asked.

"No, not exactly. Wouldn't you think we should have heard of this? I thought we were coming to one of the most magnificent cities in the world with perhaps a few bombed buildings, but this—heavens! I am sick already, and want to go back to where we came from, or better still, HOME! Goodness, I hope Caroline won't be assigned here. Wouldn't she be brokenhearted, if she could see Manila now? She loved it so and went into such ecstasy describing it to us."

There certainly was nothing beautiful about it now. Everywhere there was sadness.

Our new quarters was a bombed building without windows or doors, and with just a part of a roof. The walls were pitted with holes made by machine-gun bullets. We entered it solemnly, after standing outside for a few moments, gazing around to see if there was just one person we knew. No one greeted us. No one spoke to us, and so we registered and

found ourselves cots, the same type we had been sleeping on for months and months. I was already beginning to miss our clean barracks, our flowers and beautiful trees, and the quietness of the jungle. I sat down on the edge of my cot. Something fell on my head. I looked up and saw two little birds disappear in a hole in the plaster. It amused me and I forgot my troubles for the moment. After that I would often lie on my cot and watch them making their nests in the crevices and niches.

We learned that the building we were living in was once the Nurses' Home connected with the General Hospital, and that every nurse living there at the time of the bombing had been killed; some by bombs, and others by drinking the water that had been poisoned by the Japanese. That sent shivers up and down my spine. I looked at my locker and saw the name of a Filipino girl printed on a sticker. I quickly tore it off. I couldn't bear to have that staring me in the face.

It took about three days for our clothes to be issued to us so we could report for duty. During that time we hitchhiked to the center of the city and visited around the neighborhood. We were not allowed out on the streets before sunrise, nor could we be out without an escort after sunset. So far as I was concerned, it wasn't much fun to be out anyway. The city streets were crowded with people, and the stench of rotting flesh, filth and debris piled everywhere nauseated us every time we went out. The Filipinos were trying to do business in a small way in crude corrugated-iron stalls, but they had very little to sell. What they did have cost so much we couldn't buy it anyhow. It would have taken a

GI's whole month's pay to buy one Max Factor's lipstick. We had fun just asking the prices and getting shocked.

We were happy when our vacation was over and we had to report for duty. Anna and I were both assigned to the Surgeon's Office. Our Section Chief was a major who was a brain surgeon in civilian life. He was one of the finest men I ever met in the army, and he was a grand officer.

After we had been in Manila nearly three weeks, bulletins were posted telling us of places of interest we could visit on weekends, that were "within bounds."

"Let's go to the Chinese cemetery," Anna suggested one Saturday afternoon.

It was a long distance from Taft Avenue to hitchhike, but there were no vehicles at our disposal and no busses or trams running in the city, so we took off on foot.

"I don't see any of the swanky civilian cars we were told about. In fact, I haven't seen a civilian car of any kind," Anna said, as we trudged along in the dust and heat. "Gosh, I'm tired. Let's hail this Red Cross ambulance."

"Dead body inside," the driver said, stopping.

"It makes no difference now," I said. "We're half dead ourselves."

Before the driver said anything more, we hopped in. Sure enough, there was a body inside!

"Okay," the GI said, "you asked for it, so here we go, body and all." In spite of protests and pleadings for him to let us out, he wouldn't, until we came to the cemetery.



By the time we reached our destination, most of our interest in looking at tombs and graves was gone. We moped around and did see some very elaborate ones that interested us somewhat, but it wasn't the same kind of curiosity we had when we started out.

Two Filipino officers were standing near us taking pictures. They were speaking excellent English so we went up to them to ask them some questions about some vaults that were built in a wall-like fashion. Some of them were empty; others had bones and skulls scattered about; some were sealed. They told us the spaces were rented by people for burial of members of their families, or for themselves. If the rent was not paid, out went the bodies.

We moved on to another part of the cemetery and found several much more elaborate vaults that were open, and outside on the walks in front of them were scattered bones, hanks of hair, and teeth.

"Heavens! What is the meaning of all this?" Anna asked.

"During the war, the Japs opened some of the tombs of wealthy Chinese to get the jewels and valuable clothing that is always buried with them," answered one of the Filipinos.

"Come on, I feel weak all over. If I don't get out of this place in a hurry, I'll be a dead duck," she said, taking my arm.

Outside the gates, we stopped a truck that had some GIs in it. Boy, oh boy! I sure was glad to get in and sit down. I was terribly thirsty too. One of the boys heard me say I would give anything for a drink of good water.

"Wouldn't you rather have a nice cold can of Frenchy's beer?" he asked.

I glanced down the side of the truck and there was one of the kids I had known at Cape Sudest. He felt the same as I did about Manila; it was a good place to be away from.

Anna and I were both glad when that trip was over.

"I guess the best place to be in this city is in our office or in the billets," I said, throwing myself down on my cot, "although there are some gruesome and sordid stories being told at work. I talked with Maria for a long time today. She is that attractive, young girl who has so many beautiful clothes. I have never seen her dressed in the same outfit twice all the time I have worked in the office. I asked her if she had the same job during the Japanese occupation, and she said, 'Yes, right in this very office.' I asked her if she liked working for the Japanese. 'Sure,' she answered nonchalantly. 'My boss was good to me, but he wanted me to sleep with him and I didn't want to. I would rather go out with American men because they are more courteous. Sometimes when it was very hot, the Jap would take off all his clothes and run around the office with nothing on but a jock strap, and if he felt like it, he would even take that off. There wasn't a thing we could say or do about it because he would slap our faces if we did, or hurt us in some other way.' "

Anna shook her head. "Poor kid!" she sighed. "I've talked with Enrique too," she said after a while. "He told me some tales that were not too pleasant to listen to. He said he wouldn't work

for the Japanese because they tortured his grandmother 'til she died. He really is bitter. One day there wasn't much to do and I noticed him with his elbows on his desk, his face in his hands, staring out of the window. I asked him what he was thinking of.

" 'Oh, about the days when the Japanese occupied Manila. You know, I told you that I wouldn't work for them no matter what they did to me. I didn't either, and it wasn't easy. They came into our house whenever they wanted to, overturning the furniture and throwing things about just to be mean, and perhaps slap our faces should they feel like it. Often when I came home with our small rations of rice, one would be at the gate and stop me and ask what I had in the bag. If I didn't answer him in Japanese, he would slap and kick me all over the place until I was black and blue. Everyone had to learn to speak their language, and always had to bow before them.' "

"Enrique speaks very good English, doesn't he?"

"Yes, and that makes me think it would be a good idea to sign up for the Tagalog and Spanish classes."

We found Tagalog difficult to learn, so put all our time on Spanish. We had a fine instructor who was pleased and enthusiastic because we chose the latter. He told us he was one of the few people in Manila teaching Spanish, and that very few Filipinos could speak it. Only the upper classes of society ever studied it. It was not taught in public schools.

On the 10th of August, 1945, I was CQ from 1400 to 2400. At midnight all the girls had checked

in, and I started my rounds to make sure they were in bed and under their mosquito nets. I had nearly finished, when I heard a faint sound coming from one of the squad-rooms. It was a radio some girl had neglected to shut off. I reached to turn the dial but hesitated. I thought I heard the announcer say something about war. I listened. There was a buzzing sound, some code, and then, "The war is over in the Pacific! Flash! The Japanese Government has accepted terms of peace treaty!"

For three days we had heard rumors that the war was over, only to be denied. But this seemed to be official news, so I left the squad-room and ran to the roof. I knew I should see some sort of celebration in the harbor, if the report were true. As soon as I hit the "deck," huge lights from the ships raced back and forth across the sky, and the boom of anti-aircraft guns rent the air. I knew now that I could awaken the CO and the whole detachment. Soon every woman was up on the roof watching the rockets and lights in the harbor. Some of them were so overcome with emotion, they broke down and cried. Others jumped up and down crying, "Now I can go home! Now I can go home!"

Somehow or other, I had a different feeling—a peculiar feeling; one that I couldn't explain. I remember saying to my bunk-mate, "Ruth, I don't feel the war is really over. This seems like a little lull to me."

"Funny, I was thinking the same thing. I can't get excited over all this, but guess we should keep our thoughts to ourselves. Most of the kids are so happy."



We weren't allowed to go out on the streets and join in the celebration that was getting under way. The CO gave orders to the cook to bring out anything and everything we wanted to eat, and so we adjourned to the mess hall, where we ate, sang and talked about going home until early morning.

At 0800 the next morning, just as we were jumping out of the trucks in front of our office building, which was situated directly on the waterfront, blasts came from the ships again and again, and at this time word came over loud speakers that the news of PEACE was official.

The next day we learned that the envoys were going to meet in Manila and we felt privileged to be there at the time. We read the news; listened to radios and watched from our dormitory windows each night for them to pass. Finally, the hour arrived. We heard sirens blowing. Vehicles were speeding down Taft Avenue past our billets. "It is General MacArthur! General MacArthur!" the girls screamed, leaning far out of the window openings.

On August 15, 1945 (Manila time), General MacArthur's Headquarters issued its last battle report of the war—Communique No. 1228. It said:

"The Japanese capitulation having been announced, no further formal communiques will be issued from this Headquarters."



## BAGUIO

Now the war was over, the most talked of subject was "home." No one knew what was going to happen. Our only source of information was the papers. The *Free Philippines* said, "Between 5,000,000 and 55,500,000 men now in uniform will be back in civilian life in the next 21 or 18 months."

That was encouraging news to the men, but what about the women? No one seemed to know anything about us. We went to work as usual, conformed more rigidly to army rules and regulations, and were told there was much work to be done before the many sections and offices were closed.

It was welcome news when we heard the point system was going into operation. Many of the girls were eligible to return to the States.

When the work in the surgeon's office was finished, I still did not have enough points. I was unassigned, so asked for a pass to go to our new rest camp at Baguio.

It was a delightful trip, 165 miles from Manila, straight up the mountainside to an altitude of over 5,000 feet above sea level. I enjoyed the scenery all the way up. As we climbed near the top, we could see the Linguan Gulf below us. On both sides of the road, we were amazed to see lovely orchids growing, entwined in branches of pine trees.

We gasped in wonderment when we arrived at our rest home.

"You can't mean this lovely place is our retreat!" Ada exclaimed.

"It sure is," answered our GI driver. "You are going to have one of the grandest times you have ever had, believe me. You'll forget you are in the army for a while."

I felt as though I had been changed into a princess by the touch of a magic wand, when we stepped inside the house. It was the nearest thing to home I had seen for a long time. There was a fire burning in a grate and everywhere I looked there were luscious, tropical flowers. Darling Filipino girls were waiting to take us to our rooms. They told us that for fourteen days they were going to wait on us and take care of our needs.

Ada and I were just about speechless when we entered the room where we were going to sleep. What luxury! Beds with mattresses, sheets, pillows, bedspreads and a real bathroom with an honest-to-goodness shower with a tiled floor! I thought Ada was going to cry—for joy.

Dinner was served in an hour. I looked at my khaki trousers and shirt. I smiled. They looked out of place in such a lovely home, and especially so when we sat down to eat at a table dressed in snowy white.

We retired early that first night, with a promise to each other we would arise early the next morning and prowl around the countryside before we went on any conducted tours.

It was about 0600 the next morning when I opened my eyes again. There wasn't a sound anywhere except the throaty notes of some birds in the garden. I pulled a curtain aside and saw that

the sky was clear except for a few cirrus. I hated to arouse Ada, but if we wanted to get a walk in before breakfast, we had to get started. I shook her. She opened her eyes, rubbed them, and sat up, forgetting for a minute where she was.

"Come on," I said, "let's get going before any of the other girls are awake.

It was a perfect morning, and everything in the charming Japanese garden looked fresh and clean. We walked on a narrow path for several yards and then found ourselves on a wide, paved street. It was very hilly and winding. We had gone quite a distance when we heard voices. We stopped and listened, then turned in on a dirt road that led us into a small village. We saw no one until we passed over a high bridge and saw several Filipino girls washing clothes in the river below. We called to them, and they beckoned us to come where they were.

"Good morning," one of them said.

We were surprised at this greeting, because we didn't expect to find English-speaking people so far away from civilization. Maria was the most intelligent one in the group, so Ada and I confined our conversations to her.

"Tell me, Maria, something about the Igorots who live here, and about the people who live farther up the mountain trail near Bontoc. Are there any head-hunters up there?" I asked.

"Not now, at least not many," she answered. "The Bontoc Igorots were once fierce head-hunters, but since they have been under American rule it has been discouraged, although they still live in primi-

tive fashion. Do you want to know some more about them?" she asked, eager to talk.

"Yes, go on," I urged.

"Let me see," she started, "I think I'll tell you about the children. The Bontoc children are taken from their mothers when they are very young and sent to live together in long huts or *ulags*—one for the boys and one for the girls—until they grow old enough to marry. When a boy sees a girl whom he likes, he goes to her hut and lives with her for a while. If a baby is born, they get married; if not, the boy leaves and looks for someone else. Do your people do that in the States?"

"Well, not exactly," I answered. "However, it might be a good plan in some instances."

I looked at Ada who had a sort of quizzical smile on her face. I knew what she was thinking.

We thanked Maria for her information and started to leave, when she stopped us and asked if we had seen the rice terraces near Bangué.

"No, we haven't, Maria, but we are going on a tour this afternoon and shall probably see them. Good-bye until tomorrow morning. Do have more stories to tell us about the Igorots," Ada answered.

Maria waved a pair of GI under-shorts at us as we left.

That afternoon we started out in a 6x6 with a few WACs and four or five GIs. The roads we traveled on were mountainous and bumpy. In fact, they were so rough, the thought of a man I had met while riding on a bus in civilian life came to my mind. He told me he rode on busses because they shook and bumped him around so much it helped his liver to work properly. He was quite proud of the fact



he had discovered something that helped him more than all the medicine doctors ever gave him.

We passed lines of wee, shy little people, the Igorots, along the roadside. The men were always in the lead, and the women followed with huge loads on their heads or baskets on their backs, supported by a band across the front of their heads. They appeared to be a very peaceful, happy folk. I noticed the dress of all the mountain tribes we saw was essentially similar, with just a slight difference in detail. The men wore loin-cloths or G-strings, while the women wore short lengths of cloth or tapis, reaching to the knees and tucked in the waist like a sarong. Our guide told us that although the Igorots were primitive in their manner of living, they were intelligent; and some of the educated make good doctors, teachers, ministers and farmers. He told us of their ingenuity, and stopped along the way to show us an Igorot fire-maker made of a carabao horn. There are only a few in existence now. Igorots use safety matches.

The rice terraces were magnificent. These terraces rise for nearly 3000 feet up the mountainside, and with their irrigation system, constitute one of the largest and greatest engineering feats ever accomplished by primitive people.

In a valley, at the bottom of one of the high hills, we stopped and visited one of the largest gold mines in the world. The mine had been bombed and small cars, that had been used to carry the ore in and out of the mines, were piled in heaps—a lot of scrap. Mr. Neal, who had been superintendent of the mine before the war, was living on the premises with a servant. He took us around and explained



in detail the workings of the mine. The huge diesel engines, looking shiny and clean, were the only things intact in the vicinity.

"How come these motors are in such excellent condition, Mr. Neal?" one of the GIs asked.

"Because the Japs knew every inch of this ground, and when they dropped bombs, they were sure to leave the engines untouched. They planned to operate them themselves when they took over."

Before we left there, Mr. Neal invited us to have tea with him. He told us much about Baguio, and also about his life there before the war. He said Camp John Hay had one of the most ideal climates in the world, and in 1933 the Medical Department, U. S. Army, conducted sun tests that revealed the sun rays at the Camp contained the highest violet ray content of any known place in the world. Being an ardent "sun-worshipper," that interested me.

We took Maria and her little friends candy and gum the next morning when we visited them in the ravine.

"Have you anything to tell us about the Igorots today, Maria?" I asked.

She smiled. "I'd like to tell you what they do with their dead, if you are interested," she answered.

"We should like to hear about it very much," Ada assured her.

The small girl began eagerly, "When the Igorots die, their bodies are smoked while they are in a sitting position. After they are mummies, they are put on the floors of caves where they keep for years and years in the same condition."

I turned when she finished telling this, and noticed an old man attired in a G-string. He was smoking a queer-looking carved pipe and was poking with a long stick at a place in the side of the bank. I saw smoke coming from under the ground and asked Maria the reason for it. She said the old man was making charcoal by burying wood that had been lighted and then covered with earth, leaving a few small air holes.

When she finished speaking, she picked up her *palo-palo* (paddle) and started beating on a pair of khaki trousers. I looked at my watch and saw that it was nearly time for our midday meal, time for us to leave our young friends.

In the afternoon we visited the natives who did weaving and wood-carving just outside the Camp, and then went on a tour up the mountains to a Belgian Convent where we purchased silver jewelry made by the nuns and students.

On our way back we passed a boy with several dogs tied to a pole.

"For God's sake, what is that boy going to do with those mangy, skinny dogs?" a GI asked.

"If you are really curious, I'll take you off the beaten path and show you," the driver answered.

It was not a pleasant picture. There were several of the poor creatures tied to stakes. Some of them were so weak they couldn't stand. Their bones were just about ready to break through their skin.

"This is a dog compound," the GI told us. "Each year about this time, dogs are brought here and starved for about a week. At the end of that time, they are fed all the rice they can eat and, believe me, they are so hungry they fill up until their stom-

achs nearly burst. After this procedure, they are slit open, the rice is taken out and eaten by certain tribes in the mountains. Some of them eat the dogs also, because they use the dog as a sacred animal in ceremonial rites."

It wasn't a pleasant thought, and I could have been relieved of my luncheon then and there. By the expressions on the faces of the rest of the crowd, their stomachs were turning a few somersaults.

We were served steak for dinner that night. None of us was hungry.

The remainder of our holiday was spent playing golf on one of the finest courses in the world, and taking walks to the village, where we watched the natives in the market-place. We were not allowed to purchase anything because of the terribly high prices. MPs were stationed every few yards to see to that.

One evening, a gentleman who lived next to the WAC Rest Home called on us. He told us his wife had been killed by bombs in Manila, and that his two sisters had been taken prisoners by the Japanese. He never heard from them again. The only one of his family living was his small son, Peter.

"Where did you live, Peter, when the bombs dropped on Baguio?" I asked.

"In a cave up in the hills. Up there," he answered, pointing.

I walked over to an open window and looked up at the high hills. I shuddered.

"Did you mind living in the cave?" one of the other girls asked.

"Not too much," he answered. "It was fine if we were inside when the bombing was going on, but

sometimes father and I would crawl on our stomachs for a long time, to get rice from the soldiers. Several times the bombing started before we returned to our cave. I was frightened those times."

"Did you ever see any Japs and did they ever try to harm you?" Ada asked.

"Sure, I saw lots of them, but they never hurt me. One day I was all alone in the cave and a Jap officer came in. He asked me if I was alone, and then came over to me and took my bowl of rice and began eating it."

"What did you do then? Were you frightened?"

"No, I wasn't. I said, 'Give me back my rice. You have rice of your own.' He gave it back to me and laughed. When he went out of the cave, he turned, bowed and saluted me. He was a nice Jap."

Peter was an exceptionally bright child. We enjoyed talking with him more than with his father because he had no prejudices against anyone. He simply spoke honestly of others as he found them. Mr. Berwitz, on the other hand, spoke bitterly about the bombing of Manila and Baguio.

"There were no Japanese in the city when the Americans flew over here. They had all fled to the mountains. I was the one who crawled on my hands and knees, with fire all around me, to the American installation and told them:

"'My God! Send word to your men in the air to stop dropping bombs! There are no more Japs in Baguio! We'll all be killed!' After word reached the airfield, the bombing ceased."

He was getting more and more excited as he talked, so one of our group decided to change the subject.

"What did you do before the war, Mr. Berwitz?" one of the women asked.

"Before the war, I was a movie producer and director. I worked in Hollywood."

He told us the names of several pictures he had directed and produced. I had seen several of them.

Discussing movies took his mind off the war, and we were delighted when he suggested showing us some films.

I don't think any of us enjoyed pictures any more than we did that night. There were some old silent films with Charlie Chaplin doing his stuff. We had all seen them years before, but somehow they seemed much more comical than at any previous time. We were nearly hysterical with laughter. The pictures of the great San Francisco fire put us in a more serious mood. The last film he showed us was *Ecstasy*, and anyone who ever saw that can imagine what mood that left us in.

Bill, our "housemother," served delicious refreshments before our host left, completing a very pleasurable evening.



## AFWESPAC

When I returned to Manila, I learned I was transferred from our billets on Taft Ave., to AFWESPAC (American Forces Western Pacific), which was located in the city proper. I wasn't too happy about the change. The detachment was located in a barren, treeless spot, and I felt lonely and blue for the first time during my army career. I knew very few of the girls, and I had no idea what my next assignment would be.

I was walking to the mess hall one day and just as I was about to enter, someone grabbed me. It was Anna.

"Gee, I am certainly happy to see you. I thought you were on your way back to the States," I said.

"No, I am going to Japan. Why don't you sign up too? We have to go as civilians and I don't like that. I should much prefer to go as a WAC."

"I am not ready yet to make any definite decision," I answered. "I think I'll wait for a while and see what happens. I heard an LR regarding WACs being sent to China. There may not be any truth in it, but China has been a childhood dream of mine; if it should come true, I would then be ready to go back to the States and stay there."

"Well, keep on dreaming. It may materialize, but I doubt it. Anyhow, so long as you are not assigned yet and I must wait to be processed, let's

take advantage of some of the trips the coast guard is offering us. How about Corregidor?"

"Sure thing," I answered. "When do we go?"

"Tomorrow afternoon," she replied.

We enjoyed the trip from Manila to the island, but after landing, I didn't know whether I wanted to see any more destruction and other gruesome sights resulting from terrific fighting and bombing. The whole island was a mass of shambles.

There was a narrow road close to the bay that we followed for some distance. We saw nothing of interest. Suddenly, we saw a truck coming toward us in the distance. We hailed it and asked the two Marines riding in it if there were any caves around.

"Not right in this vicinity, but if you want to go through the big tunnel, we'll take you. We have a couple of gas lanterns. Hop on if you want to go."

We didn't lose any time, you bet, and off we started.

There were many GIs, nurses and WACs hovering around the entrance of the tunnel, but none ventured in.

"Anyone can follow us," called back one of the Marines as he finished lighting his lantern.

Anna and I were the first in line, and we noticed after going a few yards that we and one GI were the only ones.

"My God! What a mess!" I heard the soldier exclaim.

"Yes, it is a mess. Just stop and look around," suggested one of our escort. "Did you ever see such a mangled mess of machinery? Just think what a wonderful engineering feat this was."

"Did the boys who lived here have lights and water?" Anna asked.

"Look in through here," the older man answered, leading us to a narrow opening in a part of a wall that was still standing.

We peeked in through the opening and saw huge motors installed in a room just large enough to enclose them.

"You see, the motors were put in that room where they could be hidden, and then the wall was put up afterward. They generated power for lights and water."

After this explanation, we continued on our tour, climbing over pieces of machinery and great boulders with difficulty. There were several corridors leading off the main tunnel, and leading off them were rooms that had been used for various branches of the Army. Everywhere we looked we saw dead Japs sprawled on the ground, some of them buried in mud and others partly covered with stinking water. Some were fully dressed and lay just as they had fallen, with horrible, agonizing expressions on their faces. Arms, legs and skulls were scattered all over the place. I saw a huge rat eating the brains out of one skull. The stench was nauseating.

"Come on, I've seen enough of this hole," said Anna, slipping on the slimy foot of a dead Jap. "I feel as though I were going to faint. I don't fancy falling and lying beside one of these corpses in the mud and muck."

"I'm ready," I said. "Gosh, isn't war a terrible thing? I wish every American could see this terrible

sight. Just think, before these Japanese boys fell here, our own boys were lying in the same spot."

Anna didn't say anything. I looked at her and saw her eyes were filled with tears.

The next morning I was assigned to the cadre, and Anna received her orders to go to Tokyo.

"I wish you were going to be here until after Christmas," I said, just before she left for the airfield. "Gee, we've been together ever since we landed overseas."

"I know. It would be swell, but you know Tokyo is calling, and Tokyo it must be. 'Bye, and be sweet," is all she said.

The day before Christmas was hot, humid and dreary. I walked aimlessly about the area, thinking of the family at home, and then stopped in front of the huge tree standing alone and forlorn with a few ornaments scattered on its drooping branches. But, then, it wouldn't have made any difference what trimmings were put on it; nothing would have made it look like a Christmas tree. It just wasn't a Christmasy day. Standing there watching it, I realized I was just about as alone as it was, and before I knew it, I was feeling sorry for myself. Tears started trickling down my cheeks. I felt ashamed and brushed them away, hoping no one noticed. Then I walked away from the tree and burst into song. I don't know why I picked *White Christmas* and *I'll Be Home for Christmas*. I started the chorus of the latter the second time, when a coconut shell came whizzing by me. Then I heard a voice say, "We've heard that for two years. Change the record."

I turned and, to my great joy and astonishment, I saw Jane and Marge coming from behind one of

the barracks. They had just flown in from New Guinea. I was so happy to see them I nearly broke down and cried again.

Jane was planning to leave Manila for home and Marge was trying to be discharged in Manila so she could go back to New Guinea.

"That wedding is going to come off after all, I take it. Any more stalled motors?" I laughed.

"Yesiree, I'm going to marry Joe. We are going to Australia to be married, and then return to New Guinea where he is going to do some research work in medics."

"I knew it! I always knew it, and I am so happy for you both. Tell Joe I said so, will you?"

That evening I found Jane in her barracks, lying on her cot.

"Come on, let's go for a walk and perhaps step into a church. I don't care what church it is."

"Okay," she said, "I'll be ready and dressed 'fore the shake of a lamb's tail."

It was a hot night—too hot for comfort. It was a sad, depressing night too. There were very few articles for sale in the shops, and they weren't being sold because the people didn't have money enough to buy them. I looked for a toy shop. I wanted to buy a doll; a doll for some child; I didn't care who she was. I asked a shopkeeper if he knew where I could buy one. He shook his head and said, "No doll. No time make one. First Christmas free worship, free everything since Jap domination. Jap take away doll for children. He take away church. Next year many doll, maybe."



Those Filipinos were a brave people, always looking ahead to the future; never complaining, thankful they could walk the streets unmolested.

"Can you imagine how terrible it would be if our people at home had to endure the sufferings and hardships those Filipinos have undergone? I just can't picture our beautiful cities bombed as this one is, and still, I suppose it could happen," Jane said.

There were several small children tagging along behind us as we walked. Once in a while some one of them would dash out in front of us and say, "Hello, Joe. Good Joe. No Nipponese. AMERICANOS." Then he would hold up two dirty little fingers, and form a V for victory. Dirty as he was, I wanted to take him in my arms and hug him close to me for just a second.

"Here is a church," Jane said as we came to a huge crowd gathered on the sidewalk outside a bombed building. It was a Catholic church, and must have been a very beautiful one before the war took its toll. We looked in over the heads of the crowd and saw that there was only an altar left standing, and a few pews. The people gathered there for the midnight mass were either standing or kneeling, and we realized it would be futile to try to push our way inside, so started out in search of another. We walked for nearly an hour and then found one on a narrow street in another part of the city. This was an Episcopal church.

We stood outside for a few moments and listened to the strains of *Silent Night* coming from within the small chapel. We saw two sailors, a soldier and several civilians enter. We followed behind them.

Words can't express the feeling I experienced when I first saw the candle-lighted altar in that small church on that particular Christmas Eve. I had been in magnificent cathedrals many times in different parts of the world, but never had any of them appeared so grandly magnificent as this one.

The members of the choir, robed in red cassocks and snow-white surplices, entered singing *Adeste Fideles*, and the minister followed. Everyone stood. I glanced around and saw that every pew was filled, mostly by service people. The aisles were crowded; the back of the church was packed, and streams of people reached out onto the sidewalk in front. During the service I heard faint sobs coming from members of the congregation. I understood.

Jane's orders were on her cot when she returned to the barracks. Here was another WAC who would be leaving in a day or two. I had an empty feeling; a feeling of loneliness. Soon there would be only a few of us left overseas.

Time lagged more and more. I had less and less to do, so utilized my spare time by taking trips with a WAC from the next barracks. After each trip, we felt more and more depressed.

When we first saw Bataan, it was hard to believe that such a beautiful place could be the scene of a terrible battle. There wasn't much there to remind us of war except the trees that had their branches shot off, but when we visited the small village close by, and talked with the natives who had witnessed the "Death March," we realized all we read and heard about Bataan was authentic.

We passed several Negritos (little black men) on the road. The boys with us said they were great

warriors and were the aborigines of the Philippines who had been named Negritos by the early Spanish. They were very dark and had kinky hair, and were under five feet in height. The boys said the women were very brave and went up to near the firing lines, carrying food to the American and Filipino boys when the worst fighting was going on.

That night when I returned to the detachment, I went to the mess hall for a snack before returning to the barracks. The only WAC I knew there was the woman who slept opposite me. She was in an unusually jovial mood.

"Why are you so very happy tonight, Millicent?" I asked.

"It's a secret. You'll know soon enough. Just don't be foolish and ask for a release to go home. No more questions, because I am not going to answer them. Good night." She left the mess hall and then returned to the barracks, singing as she went.

I couldn't imagine what she had on her mind and what was going to happen next in the detachment. Millicent worked for the WAC Staff Director and knew all there was to know about any new directives, but she never told anything. She sure was the right person for the job she held.

It was impossible for me to go to sleep that night. I kept trying to figure out what she had on her mind, and then all of a sudden I remembered that one day she said something to me about the WACs going to China. The more I thought about it, the more excited I got, and finally I went over to her cot and awakened her. I thought that she would be angry, but she wasn't. She yawned a few times, smiled as

she looked up at me, and asked, "What's on your mind this time of the night?"

"Do you think that there is a chance that we may go to China, Millicent?" I asked softly so that I would not awaken any of the other girls.

She expected this. I could tell. "I don't know. There may be some day," she answered, and turned over to go back to sleep.

Just about a week after that episode a directive did come in asking for thirty-eight WACs to go to China to work on the staff of Lt. Gen. A. C. Wedemeyer. This was it. This was what I had been waiting for. When I learned that I was qualified to go, I signed my name to the directive, the very first one. In less than two hours, there were thirty-eight of us signed up; within two days, we were on our way to Paranaque Replacement Center. That was a lovely spot located directly on the bay where a cool breeze blew most of the time. It was a great relief to us after the terrible heat and humidity we had experienced in Manila.

I was surprised to find several of the women I had supposed were in Tokyo or on their way to the United States still there. The *West Point* that was to take the women home had not arrived, and there were hundreds of men and women anxiously waiting. The day they did leave was one I'll never forget. Many of them didn't really want to go when the time actually came for them to leave Manila, but it was too late then to make any changes and so onto the trucks they climbed, loaded down with native souvenirs of all kinds, two hundred forty-nine grand WACs. Some of us followed the trucks to the harbor where the women loaded on to an LCT, with



about two hundred fifty nurses. Then men, who had already loaded, were waving and crying out to the girls below as they walked on to barges and then into the liner. The girls did not appear interested. They were too busy singing *Sentimental Journey*, *Always*, and other hits. As the LCT left pier 15, the band struck up *Oh, You Beautiful Doll*. We left them waving to us as we started back to the Replacement Center. None of us said much as we rode along over the dusty streets. I just couldn't; there was something more than a lump in my throat.

It took some time for our small group to be processed. There were shots to be had, teeth to be checked and clothing to be issued. We were not allowed to leave the area much during the day, but at night we could have passes that were good until bed-check. I never went back to Manila, but spent most of my time with a "China" WAC, visiting the village of Paranaque just a short distance from the Army Depot. It seemed incredible that such a place existed so near such a large, modern city as Manila. The natives lived in Nipa huts built up on stilts. On either side of the road, which really was nothing more than a wide, dirt lane, there were small shops where mostly wearing apparel made from parachute silk was for sale. Several times when we were in the village, we saw members of the Air Corps drive up to an establishment, jump out of a jeep, look quickly up and down the road to see if an MP was around, and then dash in, where they quickly, and somewhat nervously, threw a whole parachute in the hands of the proprietor, who in turn tossed it into a back room out of sight. Many pesos were handed to the Americans and off they would go on the "double."



The Filipino girls made exquisite lingerie from the pure silk, but the prices they charged were prohibitive.

After a few visits to this little hamlet, we became acquainted with the people. We always took them some little thing from the PX when we went, but the most interesting and satisfying of all we did was the help we gave to the mothers of the tiny babies and small children. Many of the youngsters were covered with terrible heat rashes, and there was nothing in the place to help relieve the suffering they were enduring. Ellen and I bought all the talcum powder and lotions we could, and asked several of the other women for their rations. We took these to our friends and taught the mothers how to use them. These delightfully simple people were so appreciative of all this they would wait each night for us to appear. It was a sight to see old men and women, as well as the children and their mothers, standing in doorways with fruit, perhaps a banana or two or a pawpaw, for us. Once in a while a child would run up with a coconut or a stick of sugar cane.

One evening we had not gone far when we came upon a large group of people milling about in front of one of the huts. We stopped and inquired the reason. One of the men we knew in the neighborhood came up to us and said, "It ees a wedding partee. Come, you go too. My friend like you come, Americanos."

As much as we tried to convince him that we did not want to intrude, and that we were not dressed for a wedding, the more he insisted. Before we realized it, he had pushed us through the crowd, up some rickety steps into a small room where there was

hardly space to stand. He said something in Tagalog to a member of the party, and in a few moments a Filipino servant appeared with warm beer. Ellen and I were not in a "beery" mood just then, but took it to be polite. Above the noise and din of loud talking and laughing, I heard moans and groans coming from a small ante-room close to where we were standing. I peeked in and found the weird sounds were coming from an old woman who was lying on a low, wide bed. I turned to a man standing near and asked him if the woman was sick.

"Oh, no," he answered. "It is a custom for the mother of a bride to put on an act to show how sad she is over the loss of her daughter, that is, through marriage."

The long table, standing on a dirt floor under the hut, was laden with every conceivable kind of native food. Although we were not supposed to eat anything outside the mess hall, we tasted some of every course, and enjoyed it.

All this time Ellen and I had forgotten about the time. I glanced at my watch and found we would have to leave immediately. I started to get up, but was knocked back down again by something under the table. I was startled! The beer couldn't be the cause! I purposely dropped my handkerchief and stooped to get it. I glanced under the table and found myself staring at a huge black pig. I pinched Ellen's leg and pointed to where the animal was snooting around. She nearly collapsed right then and there. She was a city gal from New York, and a pig might just as well have been a bear; she was just as frightened.

"Come on," she said, climbing over the bench. "I've had enough of this wedding business. Let's pay our respects to the bride and groom and excuse ourselves."

This was our last visit to Paranaque, because on January 22, 1946, our orders were issued, and around noon we said, "*Pazlam*" to our nice friends who lined the little dirt road in Paranaque, waving to us as we passed. Many of them had tears trickling down their cheeks.

"Wonderful people, those," I thought. They had nothing much of this world's goods. Many of them did have before the war, but now they were working and striving just to exist, leaving thoughts of the past behind, looking forward in their own inimitable way.

## CHINA

The C-54 looked like a huge silver fish standing on the air field. This was the first four-motored job I had flown in in all the time I had been overseas, and as I stood looking at it, I was confident we would reach our destination safely.

There were eleven WACs, one woman working for UNRA, and four Chinese taking off with us for Shanghai. The Chinese were affiliated with a Labor Association. They had met the UNRA woman in Calcutta.

It was a pleasant trip. The weather was perfect for flying and although there was nothing much to see below until we passed over Formosa, I enjoyed watching the cloud formations.

Just about sunset, we caught a glimpse of the coast of China in the distance. How exciting! I could hardly believe, as I strained my eyes to look, that a childhood dream was being realized. How glorious everything was! The heavens above were clothed in the most exquisite colors imaginable, and as they faded away, stars came peeping out. Down below, the lights of Shanghai appeared like another heaven dotted with stars.

After circling over the city, we made a perfect landing, and again we were in a new land after only six hours' flying time.

My heart was thumping and playing all kinds of tricks as I stepped out of the plane. I was excited and thrilled. The cool air felt refreshing after the terrific heat of Manila.



## SHANGHAI

"Everyone will report for smallpox vaccinations," the co-pilot called out.

This over, the WACs were taken to a truck where Chinese boys were waiting to take us to our new home. Somehow, landing in New Guinea, where we saw Fuzzy Wuzzies for the first time, or in the Philippines did not have the same thrilling excitement I was experiencing these first few minutes in Shanghai. It was as though I were living in a story book or dreaming a wonderful dream. I sat on the end seat purposely, even though the night was cold, so I could catch glimpses of the city and some of its people as we rode through the streets. I thought of the distorted stories told me when a child about the people of China. I expected to see men with long queues, sneaking in and out of alleys, waiting to pounce on some innocent victim. I looked for opium smokers lying about in the gutters, and perhaps a few hungry old men munching on rats.

Instead of all this, what I saw left me spellbound. Few of the books I ever read about China described what I was seeing.

The trip to our hostel took us through parts of the business section where there were many shops, large and small, displaying the most exquisite things I ever saw. The Chinese men I saw seemed to be gliding; they walked so quickly and gracefully. They wore

long coats hanging to their ankles, their hands crossed and tucked in the sleeves, muff fashion. Some wore close-fitting caps, others were bare-headed. Ricksha coolies, pulling whole families, threaded their way through traffic betwixt trams and people calling "*Wei*" to anybody or anything blocking their way. There was an air of proudness about the coolies pedaling pedicabs carrying fur-coated customers. So far, I loved every bit of what I was seeing, and wished it were daylight.

We rode on wide Avenue Joffre after leaving the center of the city. It was an interesting, sedate-looking avenue, with its pretentious homes, fascinating shops, and strange-looking trees. The trees impressed me more than anything else, growing on the sides of the wide sidewalks, leafless. Their branches were thick and quite short. In the bright moonlight, they looked like queer men with many arms. There were no noises except the pattering of bare feet of the boys pulling rickshas or pushing pedicabs. This was my first impression of Shanghai.

It took nearly forty minutes to reach the WAC Mansion. Chinese boys rushed out with chairs for us to step on so we would not have to jump. This was the first courtesy of this kind we had experienced. A GI driving a truck would sit until we jumped or fell off.

"Hello, Missey," the boys said to each one of us as we left the vehicle. "Missey no carry bags."

"Heavens, what's this all about! This can't be the Army!" exclaimed Ada.

We were even more impressed when we entered the building. Furnishings were exquisite. There were large, fine Chinese rugs on the floors, toned-

down richly colored drapes hanging at the windows, and comfortable chairs and couches scattered about the large room. A proud-looking piano stood in front of tall French windows that opened onto a terrace. Four or five Chinese men, who looked all the world like priests of some order, were huddled together under the staircase. They were not talking. They paid little attention to us. The whole atmosphere of the place was one of dignity, peace, and mysticism.

The housemother, a charming English woman, introduced herself to us. Then she called the houseboys, told us their names, and instructed them to take us to our rooms.

"Okay, Missey, this way, pleeze," Tommy said with a big grin.

Ada and I followed him to the second floor, where he ushered us into a delightful room, with two beds, a bureau and two comfortable chairs.

"This is almost too much luxury," Ada said, pouncing down on one of the beds.

Tommy grinned. "Me call in morning. Leave shoes outside, boy shinee. Amah come get silkee and washee."

I gave him a dime. He bowed and left.

I walked over to the French doors opening out into a wide balcony and gazed on a magnificent blue dome encircled with bright lights. We learned later it was the dome of the Russian church. The sky was clear and the moon shone brighter than I had noticed for a long time.

"Come on, let's shower and get into bed. I am dying to know how it feels having warm water touch this body of mine," Ada suggested.

When we returned to our room, we found our sheets and blankets turned down, ready for us to jump into bed.

In the morning there was a gentle knock on the door, just as Tommy said there would be.

Ada looked over at me, half asleep, and mumbled, "Hey, is this a dream or is it the real McCoy?"

"It's the real thing, soldier. Hurry, get up and let's go down to breakfast; I'm starved."

During the time we washed and dressed, we didn't stop talking a minute.

"Gosh, imagine eating from a table set for four instead of twenty-five or thirty women all talking at once! Fancy having a white cloth on that table with napkins and the luxury of waiters to serve you! Holy mackerel! I don't know if I have any table manners left. Come on, let's go. I'm hungry too," Ada said.

"Some elastic in that imagination of yours!"

But she was right. Everything she spoke of was there in a charming, colorful dining-room. And the food was delicious, same Army rations, but so expertly prepared no one would have guessed it. Two girls who had flown in from Calcutta sat at our table. I envied them because they had flown the hump. What an exciting experience!

"The first thing I want to do is ride in a ricksha or a pedicab," I said to Ada after mess.

She was very enthusiastic over the idea.

"Let's go tonight," she suggested.

I wasn't overly anxious to make our first attempt under the cover of darkness, but concurred.

The only place we knew in the city that was within bounds was the Red Cross Club, so we decided to make that our goal.



Tommy hailed a pedicab outside the hostel for us. Ada positively refused to ride in a ricksha and have a human being pull her.

"When I want to be dragged through streets in a cart, I'll get a horse or a donkey, and not some poor half-clad coolie made of the same stuff as you and I!" She meant it too. What a gal, that Ada!

"Red Cross," I said to the boy with the pedicab.

He shook his head, smiled, and said, "Okay." It was a cold night. He pulled a blanket from under the seat and wrapped it around us, and then we were on our way. He peddled for a full twenty minute and then stopped in front of a dark gray building. "Okay," he said.

"What do you mean, 'Okay'?" I asked him. "This is a hospital, not the Red Cross. We don't want to get out here."

"Okay," he replied, and started off again.

"Do you think he understands where we want to go?" Ada asked.

"I thought he did. Perhaps the next stop will be the Red Cross building. It better be."

It wasn't! This time it was in front of a Chinese Hospital. He hardly stopped when swarms of men and boys gathered around us. They nearly climbed in the pedicab with us, they were so curious. Some had shaved heads, others had long beards, some were young and some were old. We didn't fancy having them peering into our faces the way they did.

"Isn't there someone in this crowd who can speak English?" I asked.

The only response was a series of giggles. Our pedicab coolie was busy, rubbing the sweat from his body and brow. He didn't even answer "Okay."



A ricksha boy, pulling a ricksha with a well-dressed, dignified gentleman in it, stopped in front of us.

"Are you in trouble?" the gentleman asked.

"Yes. Our coolie can't understand English and we can't speak Chinese," I answered.

"Where is your destination?"

"HOME!" Ada exclaimed.

After explaining where HOME was, the Chinese instructed the pedicab coolie where to take us.

"Okay," he answered, smiling.

We were so happy when we landed in front of the WAC Hostel, we emptied our pockets of all the change we had.

The boy bowed a couple of times and took off.

"Suckers," the MP at the gate growled.

We ventured out on a long walk about the city the next day. Most of our time was spent in shops on Avenue Joffre. We had been wanting to do that ever since we arrived in Shanghai. A good-looking French boy greeted us very graciously in one of the antique shops. He told us his name was Max and that he was nineteen years old. This surprised us because Ada and I both figured he must be at least thirty-five. It was the tiny mustache he was wearing. He confided to us later that that was the reason he wore it. Everything we looked at in the shop was exquisite, but we couldn't buy a thing; we were broke. He didn't care. He was just plain glad to speak with American women.

"Have you seen much of Shanghai?" he asked.

We told him we had not seen any of the city.

"Well," he said, rubbing his hands together, "if you like, we can go to Old China City tomorrow

morning when I return from mass. I shall be here at the shop at nine o'clock."

It was about three miles to the "Old City." It didn't seem that far because we were so interested in the crowds of people on the streets and the many shops we passed.

I got a new perspective of China now. Beggars, half clothed, swarmed around us. Children, untidy and unkempt, looking starved and sad, stretched out their tiny hands to us, mumbling something that went like, "No mummy, no pappy, no sissy, nobody. *Cumsha, cumsha* (gimme), please, Joe." It was heartbreaking. Ada and I always gave them something until Max told us begging in China was a racket. He said that most of the people we saw lying in the gutters and on the sidewalks were professionals in the game.

"These children you see," he said, "are taught to beg as soon as they are old enough to speak. There are members of certain groups or guilds living in the provinces outside the city who break the bones of new-born babies so their deformities will arouse pity." This was hard to believe.

We pushed our way further through the crowds with difficulty. We stopped long enough to watch an old man lying in the middle of the dusty lane, banging his head on the ground, making a terrible thumping noise. At the same time, he screamed and made other horrible sounds. Not far from him we saw women with tiny, misformed feet, that looked more like hoofs. Thank God the practice of binding the feet at birth has been done away with, except in a few provinces. Yes, Old China City was certainly a mass of humanity. We left the main road and went

onto a very narrow one. On either side there were hundreds of shops where Chinese merchants were selling silks at exorbitant prices, good jade and poor jade, chopsticks made from real ivory and some from plain bamboo. There were beautiful majong sets, scrolls and gorgeous hand-carved teakwood chests and furniture. Chinese lanterns swayed in the breeze outside most of the shops, and loud speakers blasted out Chinese music. It was not very pleasing to the ears. The instruments sound rasping and squeaky. The voices of the singers were shrill and high-pitched. Every other shop was a teahouse. There were tiny, mangy, flea-bitten dogs lying in the streets. Loud voices came from groups of boys and men quarreling, but I never saw a Chinese hit another. Their custom of keeping "face" is a good one. Children were squatting, and men were standing anywhere they could find space, letting nature take its course without any inhibitions. There was a dirty pond at the end of the lane. The largest teahouse in the city was located on the edge of it. We went in. Chinese men were sitting around, smoking long pipes and drinking tea. We didn't stay long. The stench was stifling. From there we went into an old temple. It didn't seem possible that any people on earth could worship Gods that looked like those we saw. Some were so grotesque looking they were frightening. Everywhere, people were kneeling before their favorite Buddha. I was amused to see mothers holding their young children before an idol, bowing them three times. The youngsters didn't have the faintest idea what they were doing, and had no interest in the performance evidently, for they craned their necks, gazing around, grinning at everyone passing.

I doubt whether the mothers knew much more. It all seemed more irreligious than religious. Food was piled high in receptacles on tables set before some of the images. These food offerings were made to ancestors of different households. It was placed on altar-tables, while hot, and ancestors were supposed to be satisfied with fumes and rising vapors. Max told us that in many homes Chinese have abolished ancestor worship, especially where families have become Christians. I should have liked to have stayed in the temple longer, but it was late, and we were a long distance from the WAC Mansion.

Although the Army forbade us riding on trams in China, we took a chance and disregarded ARs, for the time being. Boy, oh, boy! I never saw so many people in one car in my life. They were not only inside, but were hanging all over the outside as well. The car looked like a piece of fly-paper without a bit of space left for even one more fly.

We were weary and tired when we arrived at the hostel, but after mess and a shower, we dressed and went to the Portuguese Club with Max. We met him at his shop, where he served us pretty pink drinks. When Ada started flirting with a laughing Buddha we left for the dance. It was a grand party. I never in my life met people of so many different nationalities in one place.

The next morning was glorious, and as Ada and I were still unassigned, we planned a day at an open market one of the girls told us about.

We walked and walked and walked; how many miles I do not know, but we ended up in a section of the city where we saw very few Chinese and several Japanese. We didn't fancy this much. The men



scurried past us with their heads held high in the air, dressed just as our own men at home might be when going to business. The women, carrying babies strapped on their backs, dressed in kimonos and wearing queer-looking wooden platform shoes, ignored us.

"Gosh, you don't suppose we have walked so far we are in Tokyo, do you?" Ada asked with a sigh. "I bet we are off limits. If we are smart, we'll get out of this place in a hurry. Let's ask some of these Japs where we are."

We did, but they paid no attention to us. We might as well have asked the trees that grew along the edge of the sidewalks. The square where we were had several streets leading from it, but we had no idea which one to take. Suddenly Ada spied a man walking toward us. He was white and wore a French beret. His color didn't matter, so long as he could speak some English.

"Perhaps this Joe can understand what we say and can help us, I hope, I hope," she said, sounding more encouraged.

He was a German with a terrible accent. "Yah, yah," he said when we asked him how to get to the French concession. "I show you. Hungry?" he asked.

"We sure are, but we can't eat in places out of bounds, and this section of the city must be," I answered.

"I take you good place. Make no difference. 'Out of bounds,' bah!" he grunted.

"That's what he thinks," Ada said to me under her breath, "but let's go anyway. I'm starved and frozen. Surely there are no MPs down in this section."



"Maybe it would be a good thing if there were for our sakes," I said, shivering.

We followed the German. Ada knew how to speak his language and talked to him all the way to the restaurant.

"He's okay, poor devil. He's a refugee."

The restaurant was a very good one, owned by Russians and managed by Chinese.

We ordered, excused ourselves and then went on a hunt. There were no signs anywhere. If there had been, we couldn't have read them. We asked the Chinese doorman where we could go. He didn't have any idea what we were talking about; he simply bowed and grinned. Suddenly a bright idea hit me. I took a pencil out of my bag and drew a picture of a privy. The idea wasn't so bright after all, because he had never seen one like it. Ada was in stitches by this time, and was having a dickens of a time. She sat down on the dirty, cold stone steps leading upstairs.

"Come on," I said, "let's go up these stairs and perhaps we can find one ourselves."

"Gee, I don't know if I can make it," she said, still laughing.

There was a closed door at the top of the stairs. I cautiously opened it. Lo, and behold! There was a Chinese man in the room just stooping to pull his trousers up. I excused myself. He looked at me, grabbed his pants, bowed very politely and, smiling, walked out. He wasn't perturbed in the least.

"I guess everyone, male and female, uses the same place," Ada said, looking around for a place to sit. There wasn't any. "What am I supposed to do,

stand over this hole?" Before I could say anything, she let go.

"My Gawd," she laughed, "I am going to write a book on privies I have seen and used during my army career, when I get home."

Tiffin was delicious. We liked the pretty, delicate pastries best of all. Our German friend did too; he ate them all except the two Ada and I were fortunate to take before they were passed to him. The bill was on us.

All this time we had forgotten to ask him about the market we started out to visit. He knew immediately, when we mentioned it, where it was. "Hongku," he said. "I take you. Help you buy." That was it!

We spent the rest of the afternoon trading and bargaining with the Chinese who had more Japanese articles for sale than their own. Some of them were clean and beautiful, others were dirty and shopworn. Ada and I liked the Japanese pure-silk kimonos and *obies* best of all we saw. We purchased several for very little money; much less than they were worth.

When we reached Bubbling Well Road, we thanked our obliging guide, and after getting his name and address, we left him. We knew our way to the hostel from there.

On February 2nd, Ada and I were assigned to the Air Corps, but since it was Chinese New Year, we did not have to report for duty. Shops and business houses all over the city were closed. There was nothing to do but walk about the streets. Even the ricksha coolies were having a holiday. This was a day when poor and rich alike celebrated and worshiped.

I was waiting for Ada to dress. Tommy was sitting in his usual place under the staircase, where he sat when not running about waiting on the girls or answering the phone.

"Hello, Missey," he said, grinning all over as I pulled a chair up close to him.

"*Ni hao, Goong shee fah tsai!*" In other words, "Hello. Congratulations! May you get rich, or just plain, Happy New Year!" It took me a whole week to learn those few words. Tommy was tickled to hear me say something in Chinese.

"Tell me something about the New Year in China," I continued.

"Oh, Missey, me velly happy tell you. This dog year. All babies belong dog. Dog goody. He take care master. This happy time. No happy time long time. Too much fighty. Amelican come, no more fighty. You liky see big owagon and wantern? I take you, Missey."

"Thanks, Tommy, I should like to go. But how about these babies born during dog year? Do you mean babies born today will lead a dog's life?" I asked him teasingly. He didn't understand. I could tell by the way he squinted his eyes and wrinkled his forehead.

"Never mind, I'll be back soon and we can talk some more," I said. "By the way, how do you say your name in Chinese?"

"Ten Pao San," he answered.

Max entered the hostel just as Ada and I were leaving. We invited him to go along with us.

"What did Tommy mean when he said this is dog year, Max?" I asked after we were outside.

"It's a long story and I really should explain everything there is to know about the Chinese calendar and the significance of everything pertaining to it, but it would take too long. The traditional Chinese calendar is based on the cycles of the moon and not on the solar system. A year consists of twelve months, with a leap year occurring every fourth year. Chinese call the months 'Earthly Branches,' and each one represents an animal. These twelve animals make up the Chinese Zodiac and each one is symbolical of some special attribute. This is the year of the dog in China's traditional twelve-year periods which follow each other in groups of five, making the sixty-year cycles which have been continued since Chinese chronology began. The new advent of the dog begins the 23rd year of the 77th cycle. I bet you don't know a whole lot more than when I began talking, do you? Come on, let's go to Nanking Road and visit the Hung Miao."

"It was rather difficult to follow you, that is for me," I answered.

"Write it out for us some time and we can study it," Ada chimed in.

The streets were crowded with people, young and old, poor and rich. Everyone was dressed in the best they had. Men and boys had their hair cut neatly, a custom always put into practice at New Year's. Children were throwing firecrackers everywhere. Every now and then we had to jump because someone had tossed a bunch of small ones at our feet. They went off in rapid succession, sounding like machine-gun fire. The booming and cracking of the larger crackers was deafening. Groups of men and boys marched up and down the streets



beating drums and gongs. On some of the narrow streets, peddlers were crying their wares from small crudely built booths and stalls. They had all kinds of knicknacks for sale. Carts close to the sidewalks were loaded down with eggs and bunches of dough, where the poor were buying the eggs and dumplings fried in smelly grease. Everyone ate on New Year's Day because the Kitchen God had returned from heaven after he made his reports on the behavior of the people of his household. Away from the larger crowds, in some far-off corner, a few people were watching jugglers, acrobats, and puppet shows. There was gaiety and happiness everywhere. On this day people spent money they had saved during the year after paying all debts, which must be done before New Year's Day. No one wanted to be chased around Shanghai by a creditor with a lantern, an old custom, and lose face because he owed a bill. We joined in their gladness and felt in a festive mood.

On Nanking Road we passed a large, pompous-looking house. There was a stone image standing in front of it, as guardian for the people who lived there. An old man was kneeling in front of the image, praying. The statue was the symbol of prosperity.

In the temple, Hung Miao, crowds of very old men and women were burning incense and praying fervently. It was impressive. We lit a stick of incense for the prosperity of Shanghai and for all China. Why not? What difference did it make whether it was a Chinese custom or the custom of any other country! The thought behind it was the same all over the world, in any language or creed,



where people believed in some God whether Buddha, Mohammed or our own Christian God.

The Chinese New Year lasted a fortnight and the ending of the holidays was marked by the lantern festival Tommy had invited me to see with him. It was all very gala and gay. Tommy and I had fun.

I read a description of this festival when I returned home that night. It said that once an emperor of the Ming Dynasty set afloat ten thousand lamps on the lake near his imperial precincts, and the effect was so beautiful, Buddha came down from heaven to see it.

Orders were at last issued to the women assigned to the Air Corps. The offices were located in the Chase National Bank Building on Nanking Road.

Riding to work those early mornings, we saw Shanghai waking and coming to life. The side streets, with masses of people dressed in long blue coats and dresses (the Nationalist color), looked like rivers of blue as we passed them.

After two months, the Air Corps offices were moved to Kiangwan Air Base. The Communists were very active in the city proper. We had already been alerted twice. Every day there were thousands of them parading through the streets, waving flags with Chinese characters painted on them saying, "Send the GIs back," "Away with the Americans," "China for the Chinese," "Asia for the Asiatics." A Nationalist interpreted for me. I was mystified! I thought we had been sent to a country where we were liked and to one we were going to help. I was

disgusted. If I asked anyone what it all meant, especially an American, no one ever knew and cared less.

We saw a new section of Shanghai, riding to Kiangwan. We passed through country where we got our first impressions of the life of Chinese farmers. Their homes were mere lean-tos, with mud and filth everywhere around. At that particular time of the year there was nothing growing. I couldn't imagine, hard as I tried, how anything could grow at any time, although we saw whole families squatting outside the squalid huts, fertilizing the ground, making it ready for spring planting. This shocked and amazed us!

"Good Lord!" exclaimed Ada. "No wonder the Army has lectured us to death on the perils of eating fresh vegetables and fruits in this country! I suppose the nearer the city, the better the gardens!" She raised her shoulders and shuddered.

Kiangwan Air Base was a dreary place. The Administration buildings were the only ones there except a handful of barracks that housed some of the officers, and a few hundred Japanese who were waiting to be repatriated. The work was interesting and there was plenty of it. On our days off, we were allowed the use of jeeps and that gave us opportunities to visit places in the country we never would have seen otherwise. However, we saw nothing very impressive.

At the end of two months, bulletins were posted saying that jeeps and vehicles were to be turned over to the Chinese Government. That ended our trips, but it made us wonder.

One day I asked a major in the office just who the United States figured was the Chinese Government, when there were two distinct factions there.

"How can we avoid making the Communists peeved, when we are giving our materials to the Nationalists?"

"It does seem futile, and we do seem to be messing things up, but orders are orders. I get sore as hell when I have to thumb my way on the streets of Shanghai, while Chinese families ride past me in our vehicles. Who knows whether they are Nationalists!"

"You said something there, and that reminds me of what one of the Russians said this morning riding to work. He first made the suggestion that the United States Army should be more careful when hiring help. I asked him why.

" 'I'll tell you why. Yesterday, I was over on the field talking to a feller who was working on one of your planes. Some guy came up and remarked about the many crashes lately. The mechanic didn't even look up. He said, 'What about it! It's too damn bad all the goddam Americans in the world aren't dead.' "

He rubbed his chin slowly. "I wouldn't think too much about that. He probably wasn't feeling well. Having a hangover, I suspect."

"Major!" I exclaimed, raising my voice a little too high for just a sergeant, "I think a person who makes remarks like that should be investigated. It is a serious thing to have men like him working on our planes."

"The war is over, sergeant, don't you know that yet?"

"Maybe," I answered somewhat dubiously, "but I still think there is a lot of dirty work going on. We still have many Americans over here. By the way, while I think of it, how about those papers I filled out yesterday for that officer who is leaving for the States with a Russian wife? I was ordered to type COMMUNIST after her name. Isn't there going to be an investigation of some sort before she leaves here?"

"The United States makes no discrimination when it comes to parties or nationalities. That is what makes it a democracy and a free country. Forget it."

That ended that episode, but I am still wondering if the Russian girl he was living with and making week-end trips in American planes loaded down with champagne, to Nanking or Peiping at the expense of the American government, wasn't a Communist!

It was good news to me when I learned that a masseuse was going to be available at the hostel three nights a week. I couldn't think of anything more welcome than a massage of my weary body, especially my GI back that was taking a beating, riding back and forth to work in a truck every day.

The masseuse was a Russian; a very delightful person, cultured and refined. She escaped from Russia during the revolution and has lived in China ever since. For the first year, she lived comfortably on the sale of jewels and clothing she smuggled into the country, but after that she had to find work wherever she could. With her earnings, she went to school and then into business. Her English was very poor. In fact, there were just a few words she



could speak, although she understood nearly everything we said to her. I always had her come to my room and work on me after she finished with the other girls, because I liked to help her with her English. She enjoyed coming, and stayed very late at times, especially if I gave her beer to drink. One particular night, when we were having a very enjoyable time together talking and laughing, she left her chair and came over to where I was sitting. "I like come your room. I like your face, it make me laugh," she said.

I knew what she was trying to say, but pretended differently.

"No one has ever told me I had a funny face before. I thought you were my friend," I said.

Her expression changed immediately. "Oh, no, no, no! I say wrong thing! I know not how to say!" she exclaimed, nearly on the verge of tears.

I could see she was hurt, so patted her cheeks, and finally convinced her I was simply playing with her, and that I understood what she meant.

A short time after that I visited a cousin of hers. She lived in a very modest house, comfortably but shabbily furnished, on Rue Albert. Her husband inherited the title of "Prince" and was a prince of a fellow. He had bright red hair, bushy eyebrows, and a huge handle-bar mustache that failed to hide his long, protruding teeth. He spoke English perfectly, as did his wife, Vera. Their two youngsters were the prettiest boys I had seen in a long time, and they already, at the ages of six and eight, could speak four languages fluently.



During my visit, I asked Vera how she lived during the Japanese occupation, and if she suffered any.

"Not too much," she said, "but several of my friends did. They had to leave their homes at the point of guns at any time of the day or night the Japs saw fit to move in. I guess our home was not pretentious enough. Still, we never knew when they might come. We lived in terrible fear all the time."

"Where did your friends go?" I asked.

"Good heavens! You should have seen this house! Every inch of space was lived in by someone. That corner," she continued, pointing, "had a dentist's chair in it and the dentist slept in it at night."

One of the youngsters was sitting in my lap listening to our conversation, and when his mother finished speaking, he excitedly said, "We used to have fights with the Jap kids. They threw stones at us every time they saw us, and then we threw bigger ones back at them. I hate those dirty Japs. Remember, Mother, the time you kicked that dog belonging to the Jap officer who lived in the next house? Remember how the Jap chased you and shook you until father went out and pushed him away?"

"Don't you know, Alex, you shouldn't hate anyone?" I said. "You are too young to know the meaning of the word 'hate.'"

His mother answered the question. "I guess you are right, but after you have had to live the way we have, in constant danger and fear, hate seems to be a creed."

"I can understand how you felt when the war was on, but now, you should live peacefully. You can't go on hating forever."

"Peacefully!" she exclaimed. "Where can a White Russian live peacefully in this world, unless it is in your country? We cannot get passports to go there unless someone will send affidavits saying our passports will be guaranteed. It is hard for us to get work here also. Last week Prince tried to get a job with UNRRA, and what do you suppose the man who interviewed him asked? 'Are you a Jew? If not, we cannot employ you.' I do not believe that was the reason. I think he was turned down because he was a White Russian."

"I don't believe that was the reason either. Still, it is hard for me to think we have Communists working for that organization," I said.

She was getting very excited.

"I should like to know the purpose of that organization in this country. I have never seen nor heard of anyone ever getting help, who needed it. I work down on the waterfront, and there are cases and cases of canned goods, clothing and everything else piled high, going to waste and rot. The only people I ever see getting anything are the coolies who sneak in through the crowds and fill their carts. And what do they do with it? Sell it to those who can afford to pay crazy prices."

What could I say, being an American? She was right. I had seen just what she was describing to me and more. I often passed stands where kids were selling butter, something the poor Chinese, or even the middle class, few as they were, knew nothing about, at exorbitant prices. That is, if it hadn't melted over everything from the rays of the sun. I saw American candy, small five-cent bars, selling for as high as two dollars. There were cans and

cans of evaporated milk, cocomalt and dozens of other items, being sold on every corner. I asked a Chinese youngster the price of GI blankets he was selling along with brand new shirts and trousers. The price of the blanket was fifteen dollars to the Chinese. "You Amelican, fourteen bucks," he said.

All the items had been sent to China, but not for the purpose of being sold on the streets of Shanghai at prohibitive prices. It was a disgusting situation. I was glad when Vera's servant announced dinner, so we could change the subject.

A decanter of vodka and three small glasses graced the table in front of Prince. He filled the glasses and passed one to each of us. He picked his up, held it high in the air and said, "*Cam bei.*"

I sipped mine as I usually did any cocktail, only to find myself still drinking after everyone else at the table had finished.

"Y-o-u m-u-s-t d-r-i-n-k i-n o-n-e s-w-a-l-l-o-w," Prince said, holding the decanter ready to pour another.

I was swallowing all right, but not because I drank it all at once. I was burning from my throat to my toes, it seemed! It was awful! "Oh, no, I can't do that!" I exclaimed, gasping for breath.

"Sure you can," spoke up Vera. "All Russians drink that way. Just one more now, then we will eat."

This time I did a little better. I drank in two swallows.

The servant then brought on a platter piled high with cakes that looked similar to our pancakes, only they were much larger. I had no idea how many to take or what to do with them, so meekly asked

my hostess to instruct me in the way of eating Russian food.

On the first cake she put several kinds of fish, some raw and some cooked. She covered this with another cake and then poured sour cream and melted butter over the whole thing. I looked at it, thanked her and started. I had no idea how I was going to consume it all. It tasted delicious, much to my surprise.

Prince glanced over at my empty glass. He reached over to fill it again. I waved the vodka away. It did no good. Vera said, "You must. If you eat without drinking, you will have indigestion." Not wanting to have indigestion, I downed the vodka. Before I finished drinking, my plate was again piled high with pancakes, fish, sour cream and butter. This was the last straw. "I just can't eat any more, Vera," I sighed. "Oh, if you don't eat when you drink, you will get drunk," she assured me. Good Lord! I couldn't figure which would be worse: indigestion or intoxication! Borsch followed and then cake. I felt good. We sat at the table the rest of the afternoon talking.

"Vera, wouldn't your family be better off if you took a Soviet passport and returned to Russia?" I asked.

"Return to Russia!" she exclaimed, raising her voice in disgust. "I should rather die than go back there. Do you know what it means to live in Russia? We would have to become Communists; give up our church and our freedom. No, never will we take out Soviet passports. Once it was wonderful living in Russia, but not any more."



"I was speaking with a friend of your cousin's the other day. She said she would like to go back."

"Who was that, the hairdresser you go to? Did she give you any reasons why she wanted to go back?"

"Sure she did; plenty of them. She said in Russia everyone belongs to one party. Evidently she believes there should be only one. Then she went on telling me about the opportunities for the working people. For instance, she said if her husband was working in a factory, and he showed any special aptitude in his work, he would be promoted and would keep going up the ladder until he had a prominent position, regardless of who he was. I asked her if she would like to bring her child up in Russia, and she said, 'Of course. If he is smart and gets along well in school, the state will give him an education free, especially if he is interested in medicine or any of the sciences.' "

"Was her husband there at the time you were talking to her?" Vera asked.

"Yes, he was," I answered.

"What did he say?"

"He said he desired to go to the States because he is not a factory worker, and would like to continue his work as a tailor."

"I know that. She talks so much to him, the poor man doesn't know what to do. All the propaganda the girl was imparting to you is a lot of bunk. Sure there is one party in Russia. There can't be any other, because if anyone tried to start one, they would be killed immediately; no trial either. The one and only party in Russia is the Communist party. The business of 'climbing the ladder of success' is



a laugh. The wages paid the people are so low, no matter how high they climbed, they still wouldn't be earning much. And if the state chose to take that away, it would, and nothing could be said or done about it. Nothing! Absolutely nothing!" She pounded her two fists on the table. Then she continued, "Their body and soul belong to the state. Would you like to live in a country where conditions are as they are there? Again, I say, I should rather die."

"Yes," Prince added, looking sad and dejected, "I shall remain here and fight for my people and my church."

There was a knock on the door. It was slowly opened by a man with long curly hair, and flowing whiskers that hung nearly to his waist. His long black robe touched the floor. I knew he must be a priest because he wore a huge cross. He spoke very softly when greeting Vera and her husband, kissing the backs of their hands and then their cheeks. There were three laymen with him. Vera introduced them as members of the White Russian Organization, and said they came to discuss the problems they were having with the Communists. "You know," she said, "they tried to take over our church last week."

I was a little baffled, and asked her what Communists wanted with a church.

"They don't want the church, but they say the land it is built on belongs to the Soviets. Just another gag."

She moved closer to me and whispered, "I am rather glad you are leaving, because I live in fear during one of these meetings. We never know when a bullet will come breezing through the window or

door. I should hate to have you, an American, killed in my house."

There was no need to say more. I was gone. I never walked faster in all my life, trying to make it to the hostel.

There was nothing going on in the Russian circles during Lenten Season. My friends were very religious and spent much of their time in church.

Ada acquired a boy friend, so I had to find a new WAC who liked to do the same things I did. Ellen was a grand scout. She had not been out much since her arrival in Shanghai, so was happy to go on a tour to Soochow.

We left early on a Saturday morning from the crowded North Station. This was our first trip on a Chinese train and we anticipated it with great eagerness and curiosity. We were pleasantly surprised. It was very comfortable. At one end of each car there was a small compartment with a small charcoal stove burning, with pots of boiling water on top, for brewing tea. There is no country in the world where tea tastes so good, in my estimation, as in China. This was no exception. Young boys came through the cars with tall glasses of it for us, at no cost.

The section of the country we passed through was flat. There was a drizzling rain falling; it was depressing to look out of the car windows. But it wasn't the rain, or even the poor, dilapidated farms we passed, that affected us. It was the sight of so many broken-down coffins scattered everywhere. We didn't know what the queer-looking boxes were until the Chinese conductor told us. We gasped in horror!

He said it was a custom to bury a relative in their favorite spot. I knew what he meant when I saw them resting under trees, in the middle of a brook, or in the center of a vegetable garden. I saw a few covered with a kind of grass that grows in China. Others were nestled in caves dug in the sides of mounds. But most of them were outside with no protection from the elements.

In one place I saw hundreds of buzzards flying about. Every once in a while, a few of them would take a nose-dive into a huge opening in the ground. I asked the conductor about this, too, and he said some of the Chinese do not bother to put their dead in boxes, but throw them in large holes, so the birds can eat them. It is their religious belief that it is better to be eaten by the buzzards than by the worms and snakes in the ground. Perhaps they think they will get to their ancestors sooner being eaten by something with wings. I didn't ask.

At the station there were several horse-drawn, covered carriages, large enough to carry five people. The horses were huge. Ellen and I didn't fancy going on a conducted tour, so with permission from the CO, started out on our own.

It was a long trek from the station to the city proper, although it was difficult to find where that really was. Soochow impressed us as being a walled city comprised of many smaller ones. We were forever passing through arches in walls and crossing bridges over dirty canals. Soochow is called the "City of Canals."

We walked for over an hour looking for shops where we could purchase souvenirs, but found none. It just so happened that the only things for sale in

the vicinity we were in were robes and other paraphernalia used by priests. All this time, crowds of people had gathered and were following us. It was difficult for us to walk. We ventured in a shop once to get rid of them, but the shopkeeper was so frightened at the sight of us, being followed as we were, he rushed to the door and locked it. It was just as well, I guess, because he had his store piled high with coffins; a gruesome sight!

"I bet he thinks we are Communists," said Ellen, a little frightened. "What in the world are we going to do?"

"Get out the manual. Perhaps if we stop here on the corner someone may be able to read enough to help us out. Look for the word 'station.' "

"I doubt if there is a soul in this place who can speak a word of English," she said, as she took the little book out of her handbag.

Just then a very nice-looking man pushed his way through the crowd, tipped his hat, and asked if we were having difficulties.

"We certainly are," I answered. "We have come from Shanghai to see your city, but we can't seem to get anywhere. Are there any shops around here where we can buy souvenirs?"

"You are not in the right locality. We have many elsewhere in the city. If you like, I can spend some time with you and will take you where they are."

Before we started off, he introduced himself and said he was the son of a prominent doctor in the city. He told us he was married and had children. We decided after speaking with him that he was a good sort, and would make a good guide.



By this time we were hungry and cold, so we first asked him to take us to a restaurant where American Army personnel usually ate. We were told before our departure from Shanghai, there was just one place in the entire city that was within bounds. When we told this to Chan, he was somewhat puzzled, but said he guessed he knew where it was. He surely made a poor guess. I never was in such a dirty place. There were gobs of spit everywhere. We had to watch every step we took for fear of slipping. The waiters wore grimy white aprons and carried smelly, dirty pieces of cloth in their hands. I think the one who led us to a booth cleared his throat and spat on the floor a dozen times before we sat down. I was told when I first landed in China that the spitting before Americans represented the hate they had for us. I couldn't believe this man hated anyone as much as he appeared to. I looked at Ellen. She was white as a sheet and just about ready to heave. "Where's the Ladies' Room?" she gasped.

"Just a minute," Chan said, rushing ahead of us, "I'll be back."

"Hold it, Ellen, if you can. Chan will see that you get to a 'Johnny.'" She didn't answer. She kept her mouth shut tightly and kept swallowing.

The waiter was back in a few moments. He had a bowl of boiling water and a dirty towel. "Here, Missey," he said, and he was gone. This was too much for Ellen. She leaned over the bowl and that was that.

"For heaven's sake, doesn't he know what I wanted? Please don't order any food. I can't eat in this filthy place. I'm really sick."



"We'll have to wait for Chan to come back. I wouldn't dare venture out of this booth alone. Come, let's sit down for a few minutes and perhaps you will feel better."

Oh boy, what happened then shouldn't have happened to a dog! The waiter came in with a platter loaded with greasy duck and several kinds of fish. Chan called it Pa Pao Ya (eight kinds of treasures)! They may have been treasures to him, but not to us. Thank goodness we had to use chopsticks because we had a good excuse for dropping the morsels of shrimp and the other delicacies back on the platter before they ever reached our mouths. Chan didn't notice this, evidently, because he piled his bowl of rice high with the choice bits. What a picture! He held the bowl close to his mouth in one hand, and with his chopsticks in the other, pushed the food into his mouth as fast as he could. When the repast was over, and there was no more "ducky" left, the waiter appeared with a dirty, steaming hot cloth that he handed to Ellen.

"What is this for?" she asked Chan.

"Clean face," he said. "When finish, pass to flend."

Ellen dropped it quickly as though it were poison. I picked it up, went through the motions of using it, and then passed it to Chan. He rubbed it all over his face, evidently enjoying it immensely.

We looked at our watches and saw we had two hours before our train left Soochow. This made Chan happy and he suggested we visit some friends and then ride to the outskirts of the city to meet his family. I had great difficulty convincing Ellen it

would be an experience visiting a Chinese family in a city so thoroughly Chinese as Soochow was.

We called on Chan's friends in their office on the top floor of a business building. It was a bit weird climbing the narrow staircase leading to somewhere we knew nothing about, and more weird when we realized the two Chinese men, dressed in long coats, wearing thick glasses, sitting at a desk, were absolutely ignoring us. Chan said something to them in Chinese. They shook their heads, waved their hands, signifying they were not interested to know us. I got up to leave, pulling Ellen by the hand, but before we took a step, a boy came into the room with a tray holding three glasses of hot tea.

"Don't drink it," Ellen said, "it probably has dope in it."

"Silly, of course it hasn't. Here goes." I drank every drop. Then I began to worry.

We left without getting even a glance from Chan's friends. Evidently they didn't care for Americans.

"For Gawd's sakes, those hunks acted as though they were afraid we might try to seduce them," Ellen laughed when we reached the street. I don't think Chan knew what she was talking about. She continued, "It will be a happy meeting if Chan's family gushes over us as much as those two did."

I didn't make any remarks. I was laughing too hard.

Chan engaged a carriage to take us to his home. We drove over the cobblestone street, through the city gate, to a small hamlet just outside the city limits, where we stopped at the entrance to a narrow alley; too narrow for the carriage to pass.

"Will the driver wait for us?" I asked.

"Sure. He wait all night," Chan assured me.

Ellen stopped close to the carriage. "Who wants to stay here all night! I'm ready to board the train for Shanghai right now!"

Chan took her arm. "He wait."

We stopped in front of an unpretentious-looking building, on a side of the narrow lane. Chan entered and we followed. There was nothing in the first room but a very ornate-looking ricksha. This impressed us. We knew only wealthy families owned their own rickshas. This room opened into a large library. There was a beautiful teakwood desk at one end, covered with books and papers. Chan told us this was his father's office. Next we entered a courtyard. It was fascinating with its fishpond, rock-gardens, trees and miniature pagodas and bridges. Chan said the flowers and trees were beautiful when blooming in the spring and summer. In a corner of the yard two children were squatting. This was the first time I had noticed that Chinese children wore pants made for convenience. They were slit from front to back. I'm wondering if our grandmother's "split drawers" were fashioned from Chinese patterns. The main room of the house was furnished with a long carved table that was set against the wall facing the door we entered. There were ornaments, a pair of candlesticks and an urn for incense. Between the candles hung a painting of Chan's grandfather. In front of the long table was a square table, and on either side of this an arm-chair. The one on the right was the seat of honor.

On the second floor, our host led us into a large bedroom. A huge bed with a canopy over it was spread with lovely, soft-toned, down blankets. There

were beautiful Chinese rugs on the floors, and comfortable chairs scattered about. This was a surprise, because most of the chairs I had encountered in China were not too comfortable.

Chan called out in Chinese. A pretty, young Chinese girl, carrying an adorable tiny baby, appeared from a small ante-room. "This is wife," he said, presenting her to us. "No English."

She stared at us, looking frightened. Then she turned to Chan and spoke.

"What does she say, Chan?" I asked. "Is she angry because you have brought us here?"

"No, but she never see white woman. She ask, 'What strange creatures. Where do they come?'"

Ellen and I just stood. Our egos were somewhat deflated.

"Let's leave some candy for the kiddos and take off," Ellen suggested.

The two youngsters we had seen in the courtyard appeared just at the right moment. We handed them the candy, but they hesitated about taking it. "They most likely feel as we did about drinking the tea in the office of Chan's friends," Ellen laughed.

Our faithful driver was waiting for us, sound asleep, curled up on the front seat of his carriage.

"How about shopping; we haven't done any yet," I inquired of Chan. "Do we still have time to buy a few things? I should like some fans."

"Yes, yes, I take you near station," he replied.

Our visit to Soochow ended very pleasantly after such a hectic beginning, except for the fact we couldn't get rid of Chan. He insisted on going back to Shanghai with us. He told us he had many friends there and could visit with us. It was only when we



proved to him that only Army personnel could ride on the train that he consented to remain in Soochow.

He did visit us many times in Shanghai after that, and each time he came, he brought us lovely gifts. Once he brought us fans that are over two hundred years old. The last time he came, he was in rather a depressed mood. During dinner he said, "I thank you much for me being guest of you, but I think I cannot come more. American food good, but Chinese must have rice."

Ellen and I could not figure whether he was ill after his visits, but we never saw him again.

The Japanese compound was just a few yards away from our building. During noon hours, Ellen and I sauntered over, looking for shops where we could purchase kimonos. Most of them were gone, but there were families selling articles in their homes. These Japanese were very gracious and polite. Several of them could speak English fluently, and we enjoyed conversing with them. One couple, who were very well educated, we liked especially. The day before they left Shanghai, the wife handed me a box with two lovely pearls in it. She hesitated a second or two before saying anything, then she said, "We are going back to Japan, not as it was, but to a new Japan. I hope my people will learn and like the democratic way of living. They have learned a bitter lesson because of ignorance."

"I'd like to know more about the Japanese, wouldn't you?" I asked Ellen during mess that day.

"How would you like to eat in a Japanese house?" she asked. "One of the girls in the hostel works for the 'War Criminals Board,' and she knows sev-



eral Japanese officers working with her. She says they are a grand crowd. She knows of a place to eat. It is out of bounds to American personnel, but you'd be surprised what goes on there."

We had difficulty locating the place. Finding anyone who could speak English was like looking for a needle in a haystack. We had to call Bess, finally, and she sent a Japanese sergeant to help us.

Guido led us into an alley a short distance from where we were, and stopped in front of a gray stone building. The door was opened. A Jap stood grinning at us. He placed his right hand across his chest and bowed at a forty-five degree angle.

"Shall we go?" Guido asked, walking toward the steps.

Ellen and I were somewhat dubious as to the outcome, but we followed him into the house.

"Don't worry," Ellen whispered, "I told one of the girls in the detachment where we were going. If we do not return before bedcheck, she could have a posse sent out."

The main hall on the first floor was large and spacious. At the foot of the wide staircase, there were several pairs of shoes of every conceivable size. There was an eerie silence about the place except for the sounds made by the clumping of wooden platform shoes several pretty girls were wearing. One of them came over to us, bowed, took off her shoes and helped us with ours. She handed us soft slippers to wear. I thought I should break my neck going up the clean, highly polished staircase. The slippers were about ten sizes too large.

I saw no doors or openings when we reached the first landing. The walls were made of heavy white

paper with narrow panels of light wood extending from the ceiling to the floor. Suddenly, to my great astonishment, several sections of the wall slid open and several faces peered out at us. Some smiled; others laughed aloud; several muttered in their own language. I was frightened. I stayed close to Ellen, who was walking as though she were a mechanical toy, looking neither to the right nor to the left.

At the end of the long hall, our escort slid open a section of the wall and ushered us into a large room. There were beautiful scrolls hanging on the walls. I saw nothing else in the room but a low table with an opening in the center. Ellen and I stood like two dummies.

When I did move, I turned toward the opening in the wall. Two lovely geisha girls, dressed in gorgeous kimonos and obies, were entering the room. They each carried a mat, which they dropped on the floor in front of the table. I looked at Ellen. She looked somewhat bewildered. Then she began to bow; why, I'll never know. The Japanese girl standing close to her followed suit. Neither one stopped until Ellen lost her balance and fell forward, giving her head an awful bump against the Oriental's. The girl smiled, rubbed her head and left the room with her companion. We squatted.

When the girls returned, they had small decanters and cups, hardly larger than a good-sized thimble.

"Wine?" one of them asked.

"Oh Lord! Shall we try it?" Ellen asked.

"Are you praying, asking the Lord for his advice, or are you directing that question at me?" I asked.

"Both, I guess," she answered.

Our hostesses made no move to leave us, content to have us drink wine as long and as much as we wanted to. I wondered after a while if they knew we had come to eat. I was wishing the sergeant had stayed with us. I took a long shot.

"*Sukiyaki*," I said as plainly as I knew how. It paid off.

When they returned, one was carrying a small stove (*hibachi*) filled with hot charcoal, which she placed under the opening in the table, and the other held two large platters, one with thin strips of beef about an inch wide and two inches in length. This was garnished with sliced onion and spring onions. The second platter held cabbage sliced very thin, bamboo shoots and mushrooms. After the food was brought in, an older woman came scurrying in with fat of some kind, sauces, and a large frying-pan. She placed the pan over the hot coals, poured in some grease, and when it was piping hot, she added half the meat and half the onions. She stirred the mixture until the meat was well seared. Then she added half the cabbage, mushrooms and bamboo shoots. When the cabbage began to wilt, she poured sugar and soya sauce over it all, and covered it tightly, stirring occasionally. I noticed she kept testing the cabbage, and when this was tender, she said something to one of the girls, who left the room, returning in a few minutes with bowls of hot rice.

Each girl then picked up the chopsticks that had been placed on the table in front of us, took some of the cooked food from the pan, placed it on the rice and then handed us the sticks. Before we be-

gan to eat, they broke a raw egg over each bowl. By this time my appetite was so greatly stimulated, I had no trouble using my chopsticks. The grace and skill of the whole operation preparing this delicious Japanese meal presented a picture I shall never forget.

To show our appreciation of their courtesy and kindness, we gave the girls polish for their nails, and lipsticks.

One afternoon when Ellen and I were walking on Nanking Road, we came face to face with one of the worst sights I saw all the time I was in China.

A woman was sitting on the sidewalk, bared to the waist. She was nursing a naked baby. Two other small children were sitting beside her, playing with each other in a most disgusting manner. It was a freezing cold day. We stopped short in front of them. The woman stuck her hand out, pleading, "Please, Mum. Please, Mum."

I wanted to give her something, but a young fellow came up to us and told us not to. He said she was putting on an act for the public at the expense of the three small children. The whole thing nauseated me, and Ellen was so shocked she couldn't speak.

We had gone a few steps when a voice called out to us from a passing ricksha. "How do you like it? How do you like China? I hate it. You will too, after you have been here a while. It is a rotten place. It stinks of everything putrid."

"He has his nerve with him," Ellen said. "Who does he think he is talking to?"



"I wonder. Look, there he is, jumping out of that ricksha pulling up to the curb just ahead of us," I answered.

When we reached the next corner, he was waiting for us.

"Excuse me," he apologized. "Don't think me rude for calling out as I did, but somehow I just couldn't help it. I hate China so much I feel like crying out to the whole world. And as I said before, you will, too, before you have been here long."

"What do you mean?" I asked. "How long have you lived here?"

"Just about twenty-five years too long," he answered.

"You must have liked it to have remained here that long. Why don't you like it?" Ellen asked.

"Because these people are stinkers to do business with. They are cheats, schemers and robbers. It is such a bad place, I sent my wife to England yesterday."

I knew that was a lie because no one was leaving China that easily.

I looked at him for a second before I said any more. I was getting angry but wanted to conceal the fact.

"It seems to me, if a country was good enough to let me live in it for twenty-five years, and I earned money enough to live, and live as well as you apparently have, I wouldn't go around trying to run it down to people of other countries. Where did you come from originally?"

"From Russia, a good country."



"Just as I thought. That is where you should be right now, working for Mr. Stalin. Why don't you go back?" I asked him.

"I shall, some day, when I can get a passport, but I want to go to America first."

"Oh, you do, do you?" Ellen sneered. "Well, hear this, America has no room for people like you."

With the last remark, I took Ellen's arm and we made our way across the street on the next green light. I looked back a couple of times and saw him still standing, staring at us.

The next night a call came in for either one of the two WACs who had talked with a man on Nanking Road the day before. I answered the call. It was the handsome man in the ricksha. He wanted to know if Ellen and I would go out with him for dinner at Senets. I called Ellen.

"You talk to him," I urged. "Get some of the other girls and go with him just to find out what he is up to."

She hesitated at first, but finally gave in and accepted the invitation.

Five women were ready to take off at 2000 sharp. They all looked perfectly groomed in their pretty off-duty dresses and high-heeled pumps. Any man, whether Russian or any other nationality, would have been proud to be seen with them. They were a credit to the United States Army.

It was unusual to see civilian cars outside the WAC mansion, and more unusual to see civilians calling for the women. The Russian we had met on the street was the only one who came into the hostel. He looked very well in his dark blue overcoat and white scarf. The girls were quite impressed. I

noticed one of them wink and heard her say out of the corner of her mouth, "Not bad, but he looks as if he might be a wolf."

The next morning at breakfast I asked Ellen what kind of time they had. "It was all right, but the men couldn't dance. We had wonderful food and the music was good."

"How did the men behave? Were they obnoxious in any way?" I continued.

"No, they were all very gentlemanly and no one made any passes."

I didn't expect they would. They weren't particularly interested in women. I was convinced of that.

John didn't phone for a few days. In fact, nearly a week passed before the next call came in. This time he wanted more girls to go out, but only a few went, taking the places of those who had gone before and refused this time. After two or three more invitations, I noticed that Ellen was the only one accepting. I asked one of the girls the reason.

"I can't sit a whole night through, listening to men running down people and a country as they do. There may be things about China we do not like, but they hate everything about it so much, they asked us to write to our people at home and tell them how awful conditions are here. They suggested that we write to our Congressmen and tell them any help America might give to China would be futile."

I went to Vera's the next night and told her about the Russian. She said she would investigate and find out from the White Russians if he was known in their circles. He told me he was a member of the organization. It took about a week be-

fore she had anything to report. This is what she wrote me:

"Your suspicions were correct. I have inquired about the 'Ladies' Man' and his reputation seems to be rather shady. In one instance, a prominent man in Shanghai, a well-known surgeon, considers him a scoundrel and feels sure he is connected with the Communists. The man in question was at one time in Hongkong, gambled successfully at the race course and with the proceeds equipped himself very comfortably. He is married to a quiet English girl who works in a local bookstore. He is not a very desirable person to have around young girls in a strange city."

I was glad to find out what I could about him, but the outstanding thing I was mostly interested in was the fact that he was mixed up with the Communists. He and his compatriots made a practice of getting acquainted with as many Americans as they could and tried to point out to them the futility of helping the Chinese.

A bulletin was posted the day after I received the note from Vera. No civilians were allowed to enter the hostel unless they had passes signed by our CO. There was no need to say any more than that to the girls. They knew why the bulletin was there.

Our hairdresser and her tailor husband invited Ellen and me to their tenth wedding anniversary party. That was an exciting night for us. We were the only American women there and every attention imaginable was bestowed on us.

As soon as we entered the Russian Club where the party was held, we were handed cocktails. I never did learn the ingredients, but I remember the color was pink, and they had a kick like a mule.

The music was gay and fast and Ellen and I had no trouble getting partners. The older women actually pushed their husbands on us. It pleased them to see us try to dance their native steps, and when the orchestra stopped playing after a number, they came to us, kissed our cheeks and said, "Good. You dance Russian dances."

During intermission, supper was served. Our host chose partners for us for this occasion. Ah! What Romeos! Ellen's was a choice bit of humanity. He must have been over six feet three. I could think only of the loosely-hung-together Ichabod Crane when I looked at him. I caught Ellen's eye. She gave me a sickening grin, then winked and gave a shudder when she looked at the trump I drew. As short as I am, I had to actually look down on my roly-poly, and figured I should have to grab him around the neck if I danced with him at all. He had about two spears of hair on his head. His ears made those of a donkey look insignificant. Every time he opened his mouth, his teeth moved up and down, and once when he was eating a piece of cake it got all mixed up with them and he had to take them out and put them in his pocket.

We had been sitting at the tables for quite some time when William, our host, arose with his wife, raised his glass to her and said, "A toast to my wife."

Everyone stood.



"This, my friends, is the beginning of our third five-year plan. Let's drink to it." Everyone drank and cheered.

More food was brought on and we ate and ate until I thought I should never be able to leave my chair. In less than fifteen minutes, William again got up on his feet, raised his glass for the second time and gave another toast.

"This time, let us drink to President Roosevelt, even though he has passed on. He was one of the greatest men who ever lived. Long may his soul rest."

Everyone drank again, and again cheers rang through the rafters.

I wondered how long this eating and drinking toasts was going to last. No one made a move to leave their seats, so I sat and listened to my Romeo talk with his teeth in his pocket. He drooled, sucked in his lips and had a heck of a time. I did, too, watching him.

At long last, our host requested quietness. He wanted to drink one more toast and then told us dancing would be in order.

Thank goodness, I thought.

"Now, my good friends, let's drink to the greatest man alive today. Drink, drink to the great Josef Stalin."

Good Lord! Were Ellen and I at a Soviet party! When we accepted the invitation, we thought we were going to a White Russian wedding-anniversary celebration. I looked at Ellen. She was deathly pale. I don't think she even had the strength to look surprised.



After the toast, tables were cleared and the floor made ready for dancing again. I didn't have an opportunity to try my partner in the "light fantastic" because William came to me and said there were photographers there to take our pictures.

"They will be printed in the paper tomorrow," he said, very happy over the fact.

"Oh, no! Not that!" I cried. "We can't have our pictures in the paper. We aren't supposed to be here! We will be court martialed. Come, Ellen, let's go home!"

I no sooner finished speaking when a flashlight went "crack" and there we were, caught in a picture with our two hand-picked Apollos.

"What are we going to do about this, Sarge?" Ellen asked with a slight trace of sarcasm. "After all, you got us into this. There will be a lot of explaining to do if the Army finds we have been to a Soviet party."

"I know," I said, trying to think of something to save our skins. "Don't worry."

All this time I was watching every move the photographer made. I followed him to a small ante-room where he put the plates he had just used on a shelf. When he left, I picked the case up, slipped it under my coat and hurried back into the hall.

"Come on, let's get out of here in a hurry," I said to Ellen, never mentioning what I had done.

"We can't go without saying goodnight to some of these people," she answered.

At that moment, William appeared on the scene and asked Ellen for a dance.

"Sorry," she said, "but we must leave immediately because it is nearly bed-check. Don't bother

getting anyone to escort us home. We can get a pedicab or ricksha just outside the door."

He didn't approve of that, and went to get "Mutt and Jeff," who had left the dance-hall for some reason or other. Before he rounded them up, we slipped out of the building and got into a pedicab.

I told Ellen what I had done. She sighed, greatly relieved.

"What a lucky break! Let's hope and pray they won't surmise who took the plates. Imagine making headlines in the *North China News*,

**'TWO WACS CONQUERING SHANGHAI  
AT THE SOVIET CLUB LAST NIGHT'**

That would be our finish."

The following week I signed up for a tour to Hangchow. Andy, a sergeant who worked with me at Kiangwan, was the only person going whom I knew.

North Station was more crowded than ever the morning we left Shanghai for Hangchow. We had to fight our way through the hordes of Chinese. Luckily we didn't have to stand in a queue for tickets. Many of the poor souls in the lines had been standing for hours. Children were crying and sniffling all over the place, hanging onto their mothers who had all they could carry in baskets and bundles strapped to their backs; perhaps all their worldly goods. Men, women and children were lying in corners, on newspapers, or on the cold floor, oblivious to the huge stream of humanity moving in and out of the station. I stood for a moment and watched them. A Chinese proverb I had read came to my

mind. "With coarse food to eat, water to drink, and the bended arm of a pillow, happiness may still exist."

Well, perhaps they were happy. Who knows? With this thought in mind, I wended my way through the gate and boarded the train.

Different from the trip to Soochow, we passed through many cities. Pretty Chinese girls were at the stations when the train pulled in, with trays filled with sweets for sale. The Chinese travelers just about knocked each other over trying to get to the doors of the train when it stopped, to make purchases, and to answer nature's "call to arms." I was amazed and a little embarrassed when I saw lines of men standing on the platforms, letting down their trousers, just as if they had been trained to do it in some game. I had seen coolies leave their rickshas, men leave their families when walking on the streets, but they never did stand directly in front of me when performing the act.

Hangchow is situated about 120 miles southwest of Shanghai. It is said to be second only to Peiping in historical interest. The surroundings are even more beautiful. The city, nestled in the mountains, presented an indescribable picture. It was built on beautiful Westlake, which was covered with lotus blossoms. Everywhere we looked we saw trees with pink and white peach blossoms, and lacy willow trees.

Our small hostel was covered with gorgeous roses, and from the windows and porches we could see old temples and pagodas. The view of the lake from it was a pretty one, with many islands, locks and dykes in the distance. Sampans, paddled by Chinese,

moved slowly along the edge of the water. I was much impressed by what I was already seeing in Hangchow.

The hostel was charming. It was very old and the furnishings were a bit shabby, but the atmosphere of the place was homey and pleasant.

We washed and after eating an excellent lunch started out on a tour about the city. It was thoroughly Chinese. Beggars, mangy dogs, were lying about in the narrow streets in front of bazaars and shops where paper lanterns hung outside and in-harmonious music screeched from loudspeakers. Coolies uttered deafening calls as they signalled for us to get out of their way so they could pass with their heavy burdens slung on bamboo poles. There were others barely moving, drawing low four-wheeled carts with loads too heavy for any beast of burden. We heard dull thuds of drums and clanging of gongs coming from within the funeral parlors we passed. Rickshas passed us with wealthy men dressed in beautifully quilted coats, wearing small black skull caps on their heads. There were many butchers' shops where we saw ducks hanging on lines outside, collecting dust from the street and spray from the spit lodged under them. We found a few shops where we could purchase souvenirs. They were clean and prosperous looking. We purchased long-stemmed pipes, Chinese tobacco, incense and joss sticks. My particular loves were the pure-silver bracelets the proprietor weighed so carefully.

On our way back to the hostel, we drove on streets where the wealthy Chinese lived in pretentious, ornate homes, enclosed by high fences. This



part of the trip was dull. I enjoyed the narrow streets with all the noise and din of the poor. I liked to look at the faces of the Chinese living and earning a living in the alleys. They were strong and kind.

We arrived back at the hostel just in time for dinner.

The next morning I was up early; long before breakfast. The day was glorious, far too glorious to remain in bed, and time was going to be short. I walked out into the garden and found Chen there. He was an employee of the Transportation Department of the Nanking, Shanghai Railway, and he always accompanied any tours that left Shanghai. It was his duty to make all arrangements for a party and to see that everyone was accounted for before and after it was over. I spoke to him. He was very courteous and seemed to enjoy telling me anything I wanted to know about Westlake and Hangchow.

"I should like to ride in a sampan," I said as we walked in the garden.

"I fix that easily," he replied. "We will go now and I shall show you several tea-houses on the edge of the lake. Chow will not be ready for some time."

Chen proved a delightful companion. He told me many interesting stories about Hangchow from the time of the great King Yu, dating back to 2198 B.C. We visited the Imperial Island called Ku Shan (Solitary Hill). On one of the smaller islands known as the "Island of the Three Pools and the Moon's Reflection," he told me, there was once a poet named So who was told to dig and make the lake larger. When he started his work he found three pits with evil spirits living in them, so he had three pagodas



built over the pits. This locked up the spirits so that boats could pass without danger.

We passed other small islands where monasteries and pavilions had been destroyed in the Ming Dynasty because of the ill repute of its priests.

We moved slowly past tea-houses that were built close to the water's edge. He pointed out one he said was the best on the lake, and suggested we visit it the next day.

Everyone was up and eating breakfast, including Andy, when we returned to the hotel. It was a delightful day and everyone was anxious to get started early on the trip scheduled.

Our first stop was at North Hill where there was much of historical value to see. Our guide, who was an American missionary, told us that approximately 1660 years ago a Buddhist monk named Hui Li left India to come to the beautiful valley of this hill, where he built a monastery. The peak of this hill was so like the one in his native land he named it "Peak that flew over." In this peak are some of the oldest relics of Hangchow, grottos and carved Buddhas. Some of them date back as far as 1300 years. We entered "The Temple of the Kings of Heaven," where a Laughing Buddha smiles and welcomes pilgrims and visitors. In the "Hall of the Five Hundred Lohans," we saw images of Marco Polo, who visited Hangchow about 1280 A.D. We were surprised to learn that most of the lumber used in the erection of the main hall of the monastery was Oregon pine.

The Needle Pagoda was a huge structure. I think it is perhaps the most famous one in Hangchow. There are two accounts told about it. The

first one says it was built by one of the Wu Yueh Kings, and later rebuilt by a priest. The priest was stricken with blindness and he vowed if his sight was ever restored, he would rebuild the pagoda.

The other account says a king named Chien Hung Shu swore his allegiance to one of the Soong Emperors and, because he was afraid he would not be allowed to return, he made a vow that if he did, he would build a pagoda.

The Hangchow Bore is the most famous wonder in all China. This is an unusually strong tidal wave which rises to a height of approximately forty feet on the eighteenth of the eighth moon. There are various mythical accounts of the cause of the Bore; the one we were told said that a general being successful against the enemies of the emperor became very popular with his people. This made his superior very jealous and the general was assassinated and thrown into the Chien Tang River. His spirit ever after that avenged its wrath by flooding the country. There are several pagodas, temples and smaller places of worship along the sea wall where people go yearly to offer sacrifices.

The Bore first appears as a long white streak across the horizon, alternately rising and falling. As the Bore arrives in sight, junks can be seen riding in on the after rush. The front seems to grow higher and higher. The wave from the southeast superimposes itself on the wave from the east about ten miles below Haining, a small market town about 40 miles from Hangchow.

When it reaches its maximum height, it begins to fall away.



The front advances at about fifteen knots at spring tide and from eight to ten knots at neap. After the vertical front has passed, the water rises eight to ten feet in one hour. This lasts about three hours and the falling of the tide about nine.

The third morning in Hangchow, we visited a large park outside the city. It was like attending a mammoth carnival. As usual, there were endless streams of people. On either side of the main path, which was very wide, there were booths where hawkers called out their wares. There were clean-looking Chinese men and boys out for a holiday, playing games, taking chances on gruesome-looking images, and all appearing to be having a gay time. Then there were the unshaven, ragged, forlorn, dirty ones who, if not begging, slunk away from us as though they had committed some crime and were afraid of being recognized. We visited the largest temple there. Outside was a dirty pond where sacred fish and tortoises were trying to swim wherever they could find space between the filthy debris. Inside the temple were two shabbily dressed priests at the door as we entered, crying "*kum-sha*," with outstretched hands. There were fortune-tellers who gave us each a piece of red paper with our fate painted on it in Chinese figures. Our guide translated for us.

When we were outside again, I took some pictures. Pictures of long-bearded, ragged, pitiful beggars who were glad to have me do so for money. There were others more prosperous looking who sat in sedan chairs carried by coolies. They were happy to have pictures made of them, too, or perhaps they didn't know what I was doing.

The more I saw of China, the more I realized it was a land of contrasts. Rich and poor, beauty and ugliness, sweet smells and stench, huts and palaces, rags and furs. What a panorama!

I spoke of all this to the Missionary. "Yes," he said, "and until the poor and ragged are educated to work instead of to beg, nothing can be done here. We need schools to teach them cleanliness and how to take care of themselves, how to make themselves self-sufficient and to work with their brains as well as their hands."

During this conversation, I noticed a long snake-like line appearing from over the hills in the distance.

"What is that I see coming this way?" I asked.

"Those are the youth of China, or at least thousands of them. Those children have walked miles with those packs on their backs and will march many more."

When they reached us, they were ordered to halt.

"They look like our Boy Scouts at home. Their uniforms are very similar," I said.

"Call them what you may, but the whole thing is bad. These youngsters are being given military training by the Communists. Military training is fine in countries that are at peace, but not for China where there is a war still waging."

I thought for a few minutes, and then in an effort to find out how he felt about Communism, I said, "Perhaps Communism would solve China's problems. At least the state would put to work the thousands of people living like rats on the Whampoo River and other rivers and streams in the country. The poor, starving farmers would be taught to



farm their lands properly, and at least produce enough food for themselves."

Mr. Lacey listened very attentively all the time I was speaking. "Communism would be very bad for China. Just think what would happen not only in China but in any country that is a democracy, if the thousands of Chinese you speak of were taught to use guns. We have many Communists in China already, and will have more because these poor people don't know the meaning of the word; but if it will save them from starvation, they will accept it," he said.

He was right, but what could be done to stop all this? It was frightening to think of China being under the domination of Russia, and that was exactly what was happening at the very moment. It was even more frightening to think if we in America did not want China dominated by Russia, we would have to do more to help them than we were doing.

Chen, who preferred being called "Tiger," and I went to the tea-house in the afternoon. I asked why he liked the name he had dubbed himself.

"Because tiger is strong. If Chinese eat meat from him, it make them very strong. All part is good tonic and fine medicine. Liver, bones, flesh, everything used for sick," he said very emphatically.

He went on and on, telling me about the benefits derived from eating different parts of the animal. Every time we came to a building where a tiger was displayed in ornate carvings of red, gold and blue, he called my attention to it. Chen may have been strong, but he had none of the characteristics of a tiger. He was the essence of calmness, sweetness



and gentility. Everything about him was fine. I enjoyed being with him. He was proud because he was Chinese and belonged to a people of old, old culture, but he also realized there was need for changes in China immediately. He told me of his beautiful wife, whom I met later.

"She and her family are much more educated than I," he said, as we moved slowly over the still water. "She has two brothers, one a graduate of Oxford and another of Harvard. They are Christians, but I am still a Buddhist."

I asked him why he remained a Buddhist.

He replied, "I have never found anything in Christianity that I could not find in Buddhism that would help me live a good life."

We tied the sampan to a dock and walked about the city. On one of the side streets, we nearly stepped on a dead man. No one bothered about him. Sights like this always outraged me.

"Why can't something be done about the dead lying about the streets of Shanghai?" I asked. "There was a body of a man lying on beautiful Avenue Joffre for over a week after I first arrived there. Each morning an article of his poor ragged clothing was missing, taken, I suppose, by someone who needed it more than he did. The last day I saw the body, it was stark naked, and the garbage collectors, who, by the way, are now on a strike, scraped him up with the rest of the debris.

"Last Sunday morning just before breakfast, I looked out of my bedroom window and saw a bundle lying in a hill of mud across the street from the hostel. I called the attention of one of the girls to it, and she said it had been there for days. After

breakfast, I decided to have a look at it and was just about to pick it up when Tommy, our house-boy, shouted at me.

"'Oh, no, Missey,' he said. 'If Missey pick up, it cost much CNC.' I asked him why, and he said there was a dead baby inside the paper and if I touched it I would be responsible for its burial. That shocked me. After that I noticed bundles of that kind every few days outside the WAC hostel."

I looked at Chen when I finished speaking. I was sorry I had said so much.

"Yes," he said in sort of dejected tone, "I know. As I said before, there are some changes necessary immediately."

All the way back to the hostel I kept thinking what a pity it was, in a country so beautiful, life was so cheap.

I didn't enjoy my luncheon that day. I was glad Andy slept most of the way back to Shanghai, because I didn't want to talk. My mind was too full of China and the Chinese people. No doubt they wouldn't appreciate my anxiety because they really are a proud and dignified people. I noticed that, everywhere I went, whether to a poor home or to one of the more wealthy. There was a certain look of proudness on the faces of the men and women pulling terrific loads for miles and miles. They were proud because they could perform feats of that kind. The poor farmers were proud of their homes even though they were shacks and whole families lived in one room with their animals. Yes, these people are a proud and dignified people, whether clothed in rags or furs; and to have inborn or inbred pride with only rags to serve as a covering for the body, and

no shoes for the feet, is certainly the paramount dignity of all.

It was late when we pulled into the North Station. As usual there were crowds and crowds of bedraggled-looking people. But this was night, and instead of seeing them awakening from a sleep on the cold, dirty floor, tired, half-starved men and women with small children were hustling to pick a corner to lay their heads for the night.

Before Andy left me, he invited me to visit some friends of his the following evening.

It was good to get back to the comfortable hostel on Rue Retard. Tommy brought hot tea to my room.

"What kind of time did you have?" Ellen called from her room.

"Just grand, Ellen, but I'm getting fed up and a little anxious over the conditions here in China. It seems everywhere we go, we see or have contact with the Reds. I should like to visit some Chinese families, or any family, for that matter, who are not Communists."

"Okay," she answered, "tomorrow we can call on some friends of mine."

We started out early the next afternoon, and stopped first at the home of Dr. and Mrs. Soo. They lived in an apartment on Avenue Haig, very much like any we might see in the States. The doctor was very gracious and pleasant. Mrs. Soo was delightful and charming. Although she spoke English perfectly and her home was furnished in Western style, her dress was typically Chinese. We spoke much of China and of the United States. Neither

of them had been to America, but were planning to go in 1947.

Our next stop was near the Bund, in a penthouse overlooking the Whampoo River. The apartment was beautifully furnished, and from the wide windows we could see busy Shanghai hustling and bustling in the distance.

Directly beneath us, the Whampoo River was alive with junks, with big eyes on either side of their stems, and "passage boats," each with its special rig and build; some sailing and others propelled by large sweeps, each one worked by six men and sometimes women, who stood on an outside platform, loaded down with cargo and crowded with passengers.

There were houseboats moored, where large families lived under the most horrible sanitary conditions. I saw women dump refuse over one side and then go to the other and haul up buckets of the dirty water for washing and drinking. Close to shore, incessant beating of gongs came from a restaurant boat where crowds were coming and going. The river scene was picturesque and fascinating. In fact, I was so attracted and intrigued at what I was seeing, I half forgot I was being entertained in a luxurious home just above it.

Mrs. Melton and her daughter Jane were both attractive, although they were very thin. They told us they were interned in a Japanese camp during the war.

"Were you treated badly by the Japanese?" Ellen asked.

"Oh, not too terribly," Mrs. Melton answered. "They bothered us a great deal before we left for



camp. We never knew what time of the day or night someone might come to the door and demand to come in. They never did us any harm, but did everything they could to annoy us, like turning over our furniture, throwing books and papers on the floor or taking food from our icebox."

"Were there any romances in camp?" I asked.

"There certainly were, and several couples who met in camp married. Babies were born, too, even though there wasn't much privacy. There were no partitions between beds except sheets that were hung up by the internees," Jane answered.

Ellen was interested in knowing whether they were ever afraid that bombs might drop on them. Mrs. Melton told her they were at first, when they burst overhead, but after a while they became somewhat fatalistic.

"When and how did you know when the war was over?" Ellen asked.

Mrs. Melton smiled now, and there was a trace of excitement in her voice. "I'll never forget that day as long as I live. It was on the morning of August 10th, before we were up. I heard a very excited voice shouting, 'The war is OVER!' We didn't believe it at first because there had been so many rumors of the same kind many times before. In a few moments, another voice shouted, 'The war is really over this time!' 'Gosh, perhaps it's really true,' I said to Jane. Just then an old lady came running to her daughter, who slept near me, and started to cry, throwing her arms about her neck, 'My darling, my daughter, it is peace; the war is OVER!' By this time, one of the Jap guards, a smarty, came over to us and everyone scampered



but the old lady, who couldn't move fast enough. He grabbed her by the wrist and literally dragged her about fifty yards. Then he slapped her face until she nearly fainted. When the old lady was identified, the daughter was called into the guard house; after intense, gruelling questioning and violent bangs and slaps in the face, the mother was dismissed and warned not to spread any more propaganda."

"When did you really know?" I asked, very interested in what she was telling us.

"That very night the Japanese paper had headlines, 'Japan Agrees to Potsdam Terms.' I don't know when I was ever any happier. The news was read out by our regular reader and everyone kept repeating, 'It's true. It's true.' I guess no one knew just how they did feel. There was much excitement, and still we were all too subdued, tired and nervous after two and a half years of waiting, to go wild about it. The Japs were still threatening us and sending out notices that the rumors were all false and if we got disorderly, the Commandant (*Hashimoto*) would call the Japanese gendarmerie and wouldn't take any responsibility for what might happen.

"You can't imagine what happened in the next four days. This was a sad time for us anyhow, because my husband died. The Jap guards were really fiendish and they kept telling us no matter what happened in Japan, the million Jap soldiers in China would continue to fight. We knew what happened to civilians and internees in other parts of Asia. Someone had sneaked a copy of an American magazine into the camp. This was read and circulated

very cautiously, I assure you, and contained the story of the 'Rape of Nanking.' After reading that account, our anxiety grew more and more. Would you like to hear a speech made to us by the Commandant on the 14th? One of the inmates took it down in shorthand and made copies of it."

Ellen and I both exclaimed, "Yes!"

She read:

"On this occasion I shall not greet you or compliment you. I want to give you a warning. Acting on a rumor that the Japanese have been defeated, some of you have been acting in a very arrogant manner towards the guards. I would like to treat you as ladies and gentlemen. Recently someone took away six bottles of beer and two bottles of sauce . . . don't laugh. . . . The room was locked and I suppose the criminal came into the room from the window, and fingerprints were left clearly. In other words I should like to see all you residents in this camp as friends, but now I must change my mind. I cannot keep my words so quiet. I should hate some of you residents . . . don't smoke, please . . . of course I don't care what kind of thinking and what kind of expectations, and what kind of—imagination you may have, but don't forget that you are civilian internees and therefore you should observe regulations and order. I would say I would not hesitate to take the last measures if the residents of this camp don't wish to bring these criminals until one o'clock tomorrow afternoon. At least I would like to add a few words especially for those foolish

people who are still thinking and expecting the Americans to come. Some of you are so well educated, and such people can easily understand that there are more than one million Japanese soldiers in Central China, and these have not had battle at all. Their decision will not change whatever may happen in future. You will remember this. You should realize exactly your position, and you should wait the last chance, which means you should wait the time that you will be exempt. I hope it will be soon. Until that time I would like to treat all the residents as friends."

"The beer episode was certainly an unfortunate one for the Commandant. When the Japs announced in the press that they had agreed to the Potsdam terms, three lads in the camp, feeling sure the war was over, got into the Commandant's quarters through a window and celebrated with his beer—this was the reason for the meeting and the threats," Mrs. Melton continued.

"What happened after that? This is very exciting."

"What really happened was quite funny. Just an hour before the Jap ultimatum to us, the Japs themselves were kicked out of camp. On the morning of August 15th, the Camp representative and the jittery Commandant were asked to visit the Swiss Consulate, in the presence of the whole camp. The Commandant spoke his little piece first. He didn't tell us we were free; he didn't mention that the war was over and he was leaving the camp as Commandant. All he said, in so many words, was, 'You are

exempted from camp life.' After he finished speaking, the Swiss Consulate told us we would be free from twelve noon. That was a wonderful day. The national flags of Great Britain, United States, China, Russia, Holland, Belgium and Australia were taken from secret hiding places and the Boy Scouts performed the ceremony of slowly raising the flags. As each went up, the whole camp sang the national anthems, including *God Bless America*.

"We knew now the war was over for certain, but it had taken so long for the end to really come, we didn't seem to have the spontaneous joy, although we were happy beyond words. As for myself, I had a lump so large in my throat, I thought I would never swallow it. I looked around and saw women and even men crying, for joy of course. Many were too overcome with emotion to speak." She sighed deeply when she finished speaking.

"I think we must have tired you with so many questions, and, anyhow, I am sure you want to forget the horror of it all."

"It will take a long time to forget it all," she answered, shaking her head, "but we have much to be thankful for. We don't have to sleep five in a bed any longer and we don't have to be slapped by nincompoops. And another thing, when the pamphlets signed by your Lt. Gen. Wedemeyer were dropped, they missed us and dropped on the Jewish refugee centre. A fortnight before, bombs hit the same objective. The Americans evidently didn't know that the Japs had moved us to Yangtsepoo; they had no idea where we were and would have bombed our area just when the Japs decided to

quit. Again fate played a good game and won for us."

"Just one more thing I would like to know. Have you a pamphlet?" I asked.

Jane went over to a desk in the far end of the room and brought a couple for us. I never saw any of the pamphlets that were dropped in any country by the Americans. I was anxious to read this one which said:

### ATTENTION, ALLIED PRISONERS

ALLIED PRISONERS OF WAR AND  
CIVILIAN INTERNEES — THESE ARE  
YOUR ORDERS OR INSTRUCTIONS IN  
CASE THERE IS A CAPITULATION OF  
THE JAPANESE FORCES.

1. You are to remain in your camp areas until you receive instructions from this Headquarters.
2. Law and order will be maintained in the camp area.
3. In case of a Japanese surrender there will be Allied occupation forces sent into your camp to care for your needs and eventual evacuation to your homes. You must help by remaining in the area in which we know you are located.
4. Camp leaders are charged with these responsibilities.
5. The end is near. Do not be disheartened, we are thinking of you. Plans are under



way to assist you at the earliest possible moment.

(Signed) A. C. WEDEMEYER,

*Lt. Gen. U.S.A.*

Commanding

When I finished reading it, Mrs. Melton said we should be very proud and should feel it a privilege to be serving under the General. She thought for a few minutes and said nothing. Then as though she were awaking from a dream, she said, "I hope there will be no more wars. War hurts everyone. America must never experience the bombings many countries in the world have endured."

I couldn't imagine the United States of America ever being reduced to a mass of shambles, as hard as I tried.

It was getting late, much later than we realized, and after thanking Jane and her mother for a very pleasant afternoon, we left for home.

Andy was at the hostel at eight sharp to take me to visit his friends, Mr. and Mrs. Suer, who lived near the American school. It was a rainy, cold night. We hailed a ricksha.

When we stopped, I was amazed to see such a pretentious-looking house. A charming, young-looking woman opened the door for us after we knocked for some time. She had lovely blonde hair, blue eyes and gorgeous white teeth. Her figure was perfect. She wore a black dress, over which she had on an expensive, short, black fur wrap. Her black Russian boots reached nearly to her knees. She spoke with an accent.

"Come in, come in. Welcome," she said. "It is v-e-r-y cold here. The boy did not make a fire to-night and now he has gone out. Come with me," she continued, taking my hand, "I will get another coat for you, upstairs." Turning to Andy, she said, "You stay here and Sam will soon be in." Sam was her husband.

I could see she was a very nervous, high-tensioned person. She spoke very rapidly and I had some difficulty understanding her.

"See, this is where Andy sleeps," she said, taking me into a huge, beautifully furnished bedroom. "And this is his bathroom. Right across there at the other end of the hall is my room and my bath. The boys and my husband sleep on the top floor."

"M-m-m, pretty nice," was all I said, doing a considerable lot of thinking at the same time.

When we reached downstairs, she left me with Andy. I was glad because I was anxious to learn about this woman and her family.

"How come, Andy, you are so friendly with these people, and how does it happen, being Germans, they live in such luxury?" I asked him.

"Don't ask any questions while we are here. Have fun and I'll tell you sometime later about Sam and Nida. Only missionaries live in this house."

"Missionaries!" I exclaimed with much surprise. I was just about to speak again when Andy silenced me. "Ssh, here comes Nida."

Our hostess entered, carrying a tray holding bottles, glasses and several kinds of hors d'oeuvres.

"What will you have, my good friends?" she asked, smiling. "I have vodka, gin and some brandy, a gift from an American officer."

I really wasn't in a mood to drink anything, but to be polite, settled for brandy.

Just as Nida was giving a toast, Mr. Suer entered the room. I thought at first glance he was a Chinese. He certainly resembled one very much, dressed in a long padded Chinese coat and wearing thick eyeglasses.

"Well, well, it is a great pleasure having two American soldiers in my home," he said, going over to Andy and shaking hands. Andy then introduced him to me.

Mr. Suer was a very interesting and intellectual person. Any subject introduced into our conversation was of interest to him, and he always had remarks and constructive ideas of his own to offer. He knew much about America and American writers. Upton Sinclair was his favorite author, and I was very embarrassed when he asked me if I had read *Boston*. Here I was, sitting in a home in China with a man who was asking me about my own section of the country and I knew nothing about the book. I really got messed up trying to evade the question and change the subject.

"I never did read the book, but I do think Sinclair Lewis is a fine writer," I said, thinking this would do the trick.

"Sinclair Lewis!" he exclaimed with much surprise, "he did not write that book; Upton Sinclair did. Don't you remember the Sacco-Vanzetti case?"

"Oh sure, sure," I laughed.

I did know about the case, and remembered meeting a Mrs. Henderson who did much for the two Italians.

Mr. Suer went to a bookcase in the corner of the room and brought two volumes of *Boston* to me. I thought he never would stop talking about the case.

"Come on, Sam; let's forget about Sacco and Vanzetti. They are gone now and you can't do anything about it," Nida said as she poured herself another drink. Sam didn't drink, and Andy and I still had brandy in our glasses.

"I know, but it was a damn shame those men were given death sentences. I feel sure they were innocent."

Nida left her chair and went over to the couch and sat down next to Andy.

"You know, Andy is just like a son to us," she said, snuggling close to him. "You like me, don'tcha, Andy?"

"Some son," I whispered to Andy.

I could see Mr. Suer was somewhat embarrassed. "Nida is not herself when she is under the influence of the bottle and that is most of the time," he said. She didn't like that remark and, in a way of changing the subject, suggested I stay at her home for the night.

"We have plenty of room," she said. "We like to have Americans in the house because we are bothered a lot by the Chinese police. They want this house because we are Germans, and are continually giving us eviction notices. When Americans are in the house, they do not bother us."

Just then there was a noise on the front porch and jingling of keys.

"Hurry, Andy! Help me get these bottles out of the room!" she demanded as she grabbed the tray and rushed into the next room.



"What is this all about, Mr. Suer?" I asked, noticing he didn't make any move to help.

"These people coming in are non-drinking missionaries." He no sooner explained than the door was opened and a man and a woman entered, greeted us, and went upstairs.

"Come on in here, you little Wacky," I heard Nida call.

"No thanks," I called back, "I don't want any more to drink. You and Andy do the drinking."

I was happy to be alone with Mr. Suer as I was anxious to know what he was doing in Shanghai.

He told me he taught botany in a University in Canton before the war, and after coming to Shanghai he took a job as a chemist. His spare time was utilized writing a book on the trees of Shanghai.

While he was talking his two sons came in. One worked for the United States Army at Kiangwan, and the other was a sculptor who looked terribly dissipated. His face was a mass of pimples; he had deep dark circles under his eyes. He had difficulty making his legs move, and actually fell into a chair. The older boy, who worked at the airfield, didn't look quite so dead, but he, too, looked as if a few good nights' sleep and a vacation from liquor might do him some good. Like most dissipated people, I found them extremely interesting.

All this time Andy and Nida were indulging in the spirits. It was getting late; in fact, it was close to bed-check which was 2200. I left the library to call Andy, and found him in the next room with Nida. She had a crying jag and was slobbering all over the place, trying to convince Andy he should stay for the night after escorting me home. I don't



think she gave a darn whether he took me home. She would have preferred putting me in a ricksha by myself.

I never did find out if Andy went back after leaving me. He probably wouldn't have told me anyhow, because on the way back to the hostel I asked him if he was having an affair with Nida.

"Don't be silly," he said, "I go there because I like Sam and the boys. They all play a swell game of chess."

"That sounds good," I laughed. "How did you ever get to know those people?"

"It's a long story. Tomorrow night I'll be around to take you nightclubbing. We can go off to some quiet corner and I shall tell you the whole story."

That suited me fine, because I had not seen much of Shanghai night life, and I knew I should soon be going to the States.

At 1900 Andy appeared at the hostel. Tommy engaged a pedicab for us and we were off for the bright lights. We went to the Arcadia, Argentina, Senets and ended up at the EM Club. During the evening, I dragged the subject of the Suer family into the conversation.

"Come on, Andy, out with all the dope on Nida and Sam. Who are they and how did you meet them?"

"To tell you the truth," he began, "I haven't known them very long. When I was in Chungking, I met a French woman who wanted to come to Shanghai, but couldn't get transportation. She was married and had one child. Her husband was annoying her no end and she wanted to get away from him for a while. She said if she could get to

Shanghai, she could get on a boat of some kind that would take her to San Francisco. Being in the Air Corps, I fixed it up with a friend who was a pilot, to fly her to Shanghai. After she arrived, she went to the home of the Suers. She corresponded with me and invited me to visit her. Really, she was the one I was interested in, although she was much older than I. My, she was fascinating, although very sad. Remember the day I came into the office late? I think it was the first day we worked out at Kiangwan. I took her to the docks that morning.

"Since then Nida has been lonely and I have spent a lot of time at her home. She likes to go bicycling and so do I. Many afternoons we go out together and then I stay at her home instead of going back to the hotel at night. Sam knows all about it. Continentals live so differently than Americans."

"Part of your story may be true, but I still think there is much you haven't told me. Come on, let's dance."

The next Sunday we visited other friends, the Wongs, who lived near Honku market. Before the war, Mr. Wong lived in Boston. He met a pretty Chinese girl in Shanghai, married her and was now settled there for the rest of his life.

We found the apartment crowded with friends. I remember particularly Dr. Wu and his family; a wife and three children. They had traveled much; in fact, they had been clear around the world four times. The doctor had been president of the Rotary club in Shanghai, and was very proud of the work the organization did during the time the Americans were there.

"I do hope all Americans have found the Chinese people courteous and helpful during their stay in China. I know how difficult it is for a stranger and a foreigner to become oriented in a new country," he said.

"How did you get along in America when you were there?" I asked.

"Not so well when I first landed. I was traveling on one of your trains going from San Francisco to New York. I had my ticket, but when I presented it to the conductor, he pushed me aside and told me to wait until the others on the train were seated.

"'But I have my ticket, and if you will direct me to my seat, I will find it,' I told him. He still did not pay any attention to me. Finally, my patience exhausted, I told him I couldn't understand the treatment I was receiving. I said, 'If you were in my country, my people would be only too happy to help a stranger and a foreigner.' In rather a grumpy way, he at last took me to my seat. I thanked him, and noticing he was wearing a ring with a Masonic emblem, I held out my hand. His face turned very red. He was very apologetic. This, of course, should not have had to happen, but it was the only way I could make that American understand that, although I was Chinese, I had been educated, and enjoyed courtesies and kindnesses like anyone else."

I was somewhat embarrassed and ashamed of that American railroad conductor. Americans still don't seem to realize the importance of friendliness, tolerance and understanding of others, no matter what race or creed.

I was greatly relieved when a servant brought food into the dining-room. I did not want to talk about America any more just then, to Dr. Wu.

As usual, hot rice wine was served before and all during the meal.

"I like Chinese wines and food, Dr. Wu," I said breaking the silence, "and I marvel at the hospitality shown by everyone I have met in your country, whether poor or rich."

"Yes, thank you, I am glad you like China and its people. There are many fine things about China, but we know there must be reforms in order to raise the standard of living for the masses. We have weaknesses, but we have virtues. Most of all, we have endless courage."

He turned then to Mr. Wong and asked him if he had a copy of the *Shanghai Post and Mercury*, dated February 4th. Mr. Wong produced one and the doctor said, "With your permission, I should like to read an article by Mr. W. H. Chang, entitled, 'As a Chinese Sees It.'"

"Today, according to the Lunar calendar, is the beginning of spring, the year's pleasantest king, although wintry cold still lingers in the place. The beautiful plum-blossom, which is the national flower of China, is now in full bloom and its delicate and serene fragrance bewitches all who love it.

"There is a striking resemblance between this enticing flower and China—the former can endure severe weather and open its tender bud even in the snow, while the latter has withstood eight long years of bitter struggle and persisted



in the war of resistance against the Jap aggression until the final victory is won.

“ ‘With the successful conclusion of the Political Consultative Conference in Chungking, thanks to General George C. Marshall for his special efforts, China is now determined to build up a modern democratic state in the Far East. She has chosen Democracy because she realized that a government of the people, by the people, and for the people is the best form of government for this country. Dictatorships, however powerful they may appear at the outset, will tumble to the earth and be trampled by all the people in the world.

“ ‘Yet there are many essential tasks which the Chinese people must exert their utmost efforts to accomplish before they can enjoy the privileges of a free nation. In the first place, they must thoroughly prepare themselves with adequate knowledge of how to become democratic citizens. They must learn Dr. Sun Yat Sen’s “Three People’s Principles” so that they may exercise properly the rights of voting, recalling, initiation and referendum. In other words, all the people must have good education, and illiteracy should be wiped out as soon as possible.

“ ‘In carrying out the tremendous work of rehabilitation and reconstruction the entire Chinese people must select the important duties first. Restoration of all communication lines, for instance, is urgent and should be started immediately. In addition to all existing transportation services, new railroads, highways, air



lines, etc., must be constructed to meet the requirements of both the present and future.

“ ‘China’s agriculture, industry and commerce need to be rationalized and up-to-date scientific methods must be adopted in raising their general standard. All these measures will benefit the nation as a whole, and the leaders of various walks of life must endeavor to promote them at an early date.

“ ‘This country is particularly rich in natural resources, that are now hidden in mines which are waiting for the people to open them up. The National Supreme Economic Council will attempt to extract all the treasures in the near future, and so the prospects of China seem to be very bright indeed.

“ ‘Now spring has come, and all the people must buckle down to work with enthusiasm and diligence. Every person must do his share of the duty to look after this delicate plum-blossom so that it will bloom beautifully and thrivingly in the years to come. It is the emblem of the Republic of China.’ ”

This all sounded good and revealed the faith, the endless courage of these wonderful people, but how about some of the other headlines in the same paper. “USSR Opposes UNO Budget.” “New Sixth Takes Post at Sinmin Equipped with American Material.” “Communists Assembling Outside Mukden.” None of it made sense. Confusion was not the word for it.

When the doctor finished reading, Mr. Wong poured more wine. To change the subject of China

and politics for a while, I asked him to tell me about the wine we were drinking.

"Of course you know," he began, "it is made from rice or *kao liang*. This is not an intoxicating beverage; that is, the way we drink it. I think the name 'wine' is not a good name for it. There is a story told about the origin of it: Once upon a time, many centuries ago, a chef in the Emperor's kitchen forgot he had placed some rice to soak in an old crock. A week or so later he remembered what he had done, and wondering if the stuff had spoiled, drank some of the liquid. Almost at once he became highly optimistic and felt very happy about everything. The story goes, he started to sing and dance.

"The news of the discovery was reported to the Emperor who indulged and concurred with the servant as to the effects of the rice and water. Plans were then made for a huge state dinner to which were invited the most important people of his kingdom as well as dignitaries from other lands.

"The Emperor's idea of giving his guests a great treat had entirely different results than he ever anticipated. The banquet turned out to be more than the usual dignified feast. Dignitaries, who at other times could not agree with the ideas of the Emperor, now gave way to any suggestions he had to offer. Poker-faced, dead-pan dignitaries of other countries who were usually so stiff and silent became 'stiff' in another way and became the life of the party. It is said they went so far as to tell risqué stories.

"It was customary for China's rulers to hold their meeting for state business at four o'clock in the morning, because it was believed that men's minds were clear and alert early in the day. So before the

sun came up on the morning after this great banquet and party, the Emperor seated himself on the Dragon Throne and waited for his subordinates to appear. No one came, so messengers were sent out to investigate and to tell them that the Emperor was waiting. It did no good. The messengers couldn't arouse them.

"After this episode the Emperor drew up a set of rules governing the practice of drinking. First, he said the soup bowls which had been used the night before would be discarded and tiny small cups, such as we are now using, would be used. These small cups are called *chiu pei* (wine cup). Next, anyone who wanted to drink from the bowl must eat at the same time—not too much, but enough to absorb the wine. This is where the *leng hun* or hors d'oeuvre originated in China. Finally, the Emperor insisted either mild physical games or mental quizzes should be engaged in, so the guests could stand on their feet or sit on their chairs without falling. So you see, that is why you can drink this wine all day and never be intoxicated, that is if you eat."

"Thanks so much for that interesting account. Now how about the black eggs I see so much around China. Is it true they have been buried in the ground for years and years before they are eaten?"

"No, that is not so. 'Ming Dynasty Eggs,' as you have probably heard them called, is just a fictitious name given to them. They are simply duck eggs that are encased in a coating of mud, wheat chaff and tea, and then roasted for four or five hours. This causes a chemical and a physical change."

I smiled and thanked him for the information. "I feel as though I could eat one now, when it is offered to me."

"Well, my friends," Dr. Wu said as he rose from his chair, there is a proverb that says, 'Earth has no feasts which do not break up,' so I think I must leave this one, much as I dislike to."

I was glad he was the first to break up the party, although it is a perfectly good custom in China for a guest to leave whenever he or she desires during a meal.

Andy was alerted for Easter morning, and during the week before he left China, he visited friends he had in Shanghai for the last time. He knew more women in that city than most men know all their lives. Everyone of them was interesting. There was a German girl who was engaged to marry a Japanese. She lived in the Japanese compound and was the only white woman living there. She loved the Japanese people because they had been very kind to her during the war. Then there was a Chinese girl who was a laboratory technician in one of the hospitals in the city. Andy said she was very cold and discreet, and no matter how hard he tried to draw her out of her shell, he failed. He told her she would never get a man so long as she remained so frigid. "Even an icicle melts sometime," he informed her, but I guess she never melted. At least that is the way I heard it. I don't know how many others he called on, but I do know he never did go to see Nida although she called him on the phone every day.



Evenings he came to the hostel and had dinner with me. Often we sat through some good movies, or played the piano and sang. He played beautifully.

Finally, Saturday night came, his last night in Shanghai, perhaps forever. We planned to attend the Russian Easter services which started at midnight.

We left the WAC hostel early, and walked a long time on Avenue Joffre, stopping in to pay a short visit to Max, who said he was sailing the next day, as a sailor in the French Navy. From there, we went to the Public Park at the corner of Avenue Joffre and Rue la Tour. What a time we had with an old man standing at the entrance, who refused to let us in until we paid him a thousand CNC.

"How come we have to pay to go in this park? I've been here many times before and never paid anything," Andy said, somewhat perturbed.

The old man just threw his arms about in a crazy fashion, mumbling something about "late," so Andy gave him a bill. We had to laugh when we realized how he had figured there would be people going into the park on Easter Eve, and planned on making a few CN for himself, the schemer.

The park was a lovely place; it seemed especially so this Easter Eve. The air was soft and mild, and in the moonlight we could see the jonquils, daffodils and hyacinths peeping out of the ground in the well-cared-for gardens. A fountain was bubbling up out of a small pond, sending its spray high up into the air. We sat down on a settee on the edge of the water, directly opposite the church. The dome of the building looked especially beautiful. The blue had been washed and more lights had been added,



giving the effect of a gorgeous sapphire ring set in diamonds. We chose this particular place to sit so we could hear the choir singing before the services started.

I hated to disturb the tranquility and peace of this heavenly spot, but I was still curious to learn more about Nida and Sam before Andy left Shanghai.

"Why did you refuse to see Nida before you left here?" I asked.

"Because I am leaving the country, I will tell you. To begin, I shall have to admit Nida was very kind to me, and she really did think she was in love with me. As far as I was concerned, it was asinine. She was a married woman with sons nearly as old as I, but still she was lonely. Often, when I was there at night, she would sneak into my room and sit on the edge of my bed and cry. She was forever telling me how unhappy she was, living with Sam. What could I do about it? I told her I had a wife at home whom I loved. She wouldn't listen to me and became so unreasonable I had to stop going there. But, that isn't the only reason. One night I opened one of the drawers in a chest in the room I was occupying, to put away some clothes of mine, and I found a lot of papers. I knew Nida didn't intend to leave them there. There was Japanese writing on several of them. I became interested. I looked at them all and found documents showing that the boys broadcast during the war, in collaboration with the Japs. That ended my overnight visits. I knew then why the Japanese had not bothered them and had allowed them to live in such luxury. They were Nazis and had made themselves very rich. They were posing as missionaries and that is why they were

allowed to live in that house. Nida hasn't the slightest idea I know all this. Tell her sometime, when I am miles away, will you? I didn't have the heart to do it."

I made no answer. We could hear the strains of the organ coming from the church. We left the pretty gardens and the busy little fountain, to attend the services.

When we reached the exit of the park, the same old man was there. He let down the heavy rope that hung across the path and asked with a quizzical smile, "Have funny?" We realized this was a form of Chinese humor and walked past him and simply said, "*Ni hao.*"

The church was crowded, and we had difficulty pushing ourselves to where we could see the altar and watch the priests. There were no pews. Everyone was either standing or kneeling. Each person held a lighted candle. A woman fainted and fell against me. I helped with others to get her outside where she could get some air.

Andy and I did not venture in the church again. We waited for the priests to appear on the sidewalks outside. It was a thrilling sight to watch them parade around the church, garbed in gorgeous, heavily embroidered robes. When the ceremony was over, friends and families kissed hands and cheeks, crying in Russian, "Christ is risen!"

The CO forgot to tell the guard at the hostel I was out. I guess I was the only WAC out that night. We pounded on the gate, rattled the lock, but to no avail, so Andy climbed up over the high

fence. The guard was fast asleep. Lucky for me I had my pass.

I never saw Andy again after that night. I received a short note from him, written fifteen minutes before the ship sailed that was to take him home. I knew I should miss him.

On Easter morning I visited Vera and her nice family as I promised. I took Easter eggs filled with little candies to Alex and Volodia, and a pretty bouquet of spring flowers to Vera. The house was crowded with friends and neighbors; some poor, some wealthy; White Russians, Americans and some of other nationalities.

The tables in the small dining-room were loaded down with all kinds of delicious foods. All of it represented savings of many days and weeks. Easter is the most important day of the year to these people. There were several roasts of meat, duck and chicken. Fish, cooked and uncooked, was piled high on platters. Bowls heaped with sour cream were scattered about, but the best and most important food of all to a Russian on Easter are the great high cakes, made and baked by the women. If one of these cakes fails to rise, it is a calamity in a Russian household.

Everyone ate with great relish on this day of days, after fasting for forty days and nights. We sat around the table for several hours after we finished eating, and then Vera suggested we make calls on friends.

We went to the home of the masseuse first, where we found more people and much more food. I was attracted to a very young, pretty artist and her husband. She took me to her small attic room and

showed me some of her paintings. I felt so sorry for her. There was no market for her work in China. She was half-starved and was wasting away, the effects of tuberculosis. I promised to take her whatever I could get from the PX the next day.

From there we went to the Bund, where an American lived with his family, a wife and a small son, on the top floor of a high building. It was a weird sort of place. The Andersons were the only people living in the building. When we first arrived, the elevator boy hesitated about taking us up; only when we convinced him we were expected did he condescend to do so.

Outside one of the doors near the elevator there was a string hanging. Vera gave it a pull. A small slide, like one in the old-time "speakeasies," was pushed aside, and an eye peered out. The servant recognized Vera.

There was a long bar along one side of the first room we entered. Evidently it had not been used for some time because it was covered with dust, and the glasses and buckets on the shelves looked as though they needed a good scrubbing. In a corner on the opposite side of the room there was a small enclosure, not much larger than a telephone booth. I was astounded when I saw a curtain pulled aside, and the face of a Jap staring out at us. I couldn't understand all this. I asked Vera about it. She knew nothing—so she said—and never asked questions because she liked the Andersons and did not want to do anything that might stop her visits to them. Further along in the same room, there was a long table with chairs placed around it. The servant opened a door. The room we now entered was



a beautiful one. It had windows all along the front side, through which we could see most of the city of Shanghai, and the country stretching for miles. The room was furnished in excellent taste. I never saw so many lovely flowers in one room. They were in every corner and on every table.

We were hardly seated when a pretty but sad-looking young woman entered the room. She was happy to see us, I know, but she had difficulty showing it.

"Do sit down," she said. "Jack will be here soon."

"How are things going with you?" Vera asked. "Are you any happier than when I saw you last?"

"Oh, no," she answered half crying. "I'll never be happy living here. I hate it more than you will ever know. You see," she went on, "this was the German Club before the war and I worked here as a scrub girl. When peace was declared, Americans came into the building. My husband was one of them. I was on my knees scrubbing the floor in the bar. There were several German officers drinking. The Americans pulled out their guns and pointed them at the Germans, ordering them to get out. Jack came over to me and told me to get up off my knees. He was very kind to me after that and offered me a nice home and pretty clothes, and here I am.

"This is a house and I have clothes, but that is all. We aren't supposed to be living here. Every day the authorities come and order us out. This building belongs to the Chinese and they should have it. We don't pay a penny for rent. I am so nervous and ill I don't know how I can stand it another day. Sometimes Jack goes away for days at a time and



I am here alone. But the worst thing of all, he is drinking himself to death. Someone told me he has another wife in the interior, and that is where he goes when he leaves me. She is a Chinese girl."

She sobbed for a long time. Vera and I let her cry because we knew it would be good for her. Poor soul!

Our host arrived in about an hour. He wore the uniform of an American officer, but said, after some questioning, he was not in the Army. He never did explain why he was wearing the uniform. He said he was working for the American Government and had lived in China for over thirty years. The whole thing was a mystery to me.

Jeeps were not available after 2100, so we left there early. On the way back to Vera's house I asked her how things were going with her and her family.

"Things are still boiling," she said. "My cousin came into the house last night and warned us the Soviet group is contemplating to 'eliminate' my husband if he does not stop being 'unfriendly,' 'reactionary,' etc. Some of the newly made 'Soviet patriots' told her about it just because they still like her and know she is a relative of ours. It may be just a way of trying to make us agreeable to their rules and regulations. I should think they would be unlikely to start anything as drastic as that now, with the eyes of the whole world on them. Still we can never tell what this group of aggressors will do."

"How about your church? Have you had any more trouble?" I asked.

"Everything is quiet right now. The Soviet bishop is still lingering on in Shanghai, getting decorations such as a cross of diamonds for his head wear, and

the same for his robes. The Patriarch of Moscow has awarded these precious gifts for special services rendered. That makes me laugh. What services?" she finished, sarcastically.

"How about the priest, Father Aphanasius, is he still here or did he get to San Francisco?" I asked.

"Yes," she answered, "he is still here. It is not easy to get into that all desirable country of yours. There are lines of people standing outside the American Consulate for hours and hours every day with no hope of ever getting away.

"How I would love to go to America, but I guess we, like everyone else who would like to go, are caught between the devil and the deep blue sea, the Whampoo River modestly taking the place of the deep blue sea. I wish my boys could get to your country and become American citizens."

By this time we had reached her home, where we left her. I felt sorry and sad for her because I was sure, after knowing her as I did, she and her family would make good citizens of the United States.

The weather was getting warmer and warmer every day now. The trees all over the city had tiny leaves peeking out at the sunlight. It was a revelation to be able to go out on the beautiful, spacious lawns in the rear of the building and spread ourselves out in the sunshine. The tennis courts were rolled and painted, and on these glorious mornings Ellen and I arose early enough to play a set or two before breakfast. The badminton sets were up and the ball diamond was in readiness for those who wanted to play softball. Yes, late spring in Shanghai was soft and lovely, as lovely as in any part of

the world I had ever been. May was even more delightful than April. Every corner of the city had stands laden down with roses, pom-poms, daffodils, jonquils, cosmos, bright-red geraniums and several other varieties of plants and flowers. I never did pay any attention to the filth and garbage after the flowers took their places there.

On a night near the end of May, Ellen and I were lying on our cots. The French doors were wide open, and the mild, clear air refreshed us after a hard day's work in the office. The moon was full and sent a golden stream of light through the open door. I never saw the stars shining any brighter.

Ellen broke the silence. "I think now that the Air Corps is transferring its personnel, and we have an opportunity to be released from our present assignments, I'll ask to go to Peiping. What are you going to do?"

"I am going home, Ellen. I have much to go home to: mother, Joan, the baby, and Donald. Spring is in full swing in New England, too, you know. I have been away a long time and I wouldn't have missed a minute of anything I have seen or done, but I have a real nostalgia for the good old United States."

During the two weeks before I left Shanghai, I visited all my friends. They gave teas and parties for me and several came to the hostel with gifts of some kind. I really hated parting from each and every one of them.

I spent a whole afternoon with Vera and her family. We talked for hours about the conditions in China and then I asked her to call on the little artist

and the hairdresser with me. I also wanted to see the masseuse.

"Don't you know what has happened?" she asked, rather surprised.

"Those two families departed about three weeks ago to the 'Land of Soviet Paradise.' My cousin, the masseuse, received a letter from your hairdresser just a day or so ago, and she said they were all assigned to jobs, such as the government saw fit to give them, in one region in Western Siberia. They begged for food parcels, even though we packed plenty for them when they left here. I feel sorry for them in a way, but they got what they wanted. I do hope they are disappointed enough never to want to support Soviets abroad. Gosh, I hope the world in general and America in particular will wake up and realize what the 'Red Maniacs of Moscow' are after. And I hope it won't be too late when they do wake up and that the damage will not already have been done. There is no limit to their aspirations unless checked. Americans seem to be inclined to think there can be a compromise made with the Soviet Government, and unfortunately for themselves, consider Soviet Government as something decent people can recognize. I have told you all this before, but you were rather reluctant about believing that I was right in sizing up the Soviet Government. You told me one time you thought Stalin was the strongest leader in the world, and, after you visited Volcho-koffs, what they told you seemed to have a cooling effect on my revelations. Be honest now, isn't that true?"

“Not exactly, Vera. I will admit I thought Stalin was a strong man and I still think he is building a strong country. Perhaps I should say that Stalin’s theories are good, if they were put into practice.”

I felt sorry for Vera and her small family when I left them that day.



## ORDERS FOR HOME

When I returned to the billets, I found I was alerted for Tuesday, June 17. I realized now I was really going home. Although I was happy about it, I had a queer feeling about leaving Ellen and the few girls who were in Shanghai, so many thousands of miles away from home.

I glanced at Tommy as I started up the wide staircase, and knew I should miss the luxury of having a faithful houseboy wait on me. When I put my laundry outside my door that night, I thought of the days to come when I should have no kind amah to wash and iron so beautifully for me.

The next day when I said, "*Ni hao*" to "Charlie," our witty little tailor, I nearly wept. I always enjoyed teasing him as much as he chided me. I shall remember as long as I live, the remarks he made when he was fitting the lovely silk dresses he designed for me. Once I complained about some small detail. He looked at me, smiled and said, "Why you no likee Chinese girl? They no bigee in flont. You too bigee. Stickee out too muchee."

June 17th was a perfect day, as perfect and as rare as the day James Russell Lowell wrote about. The air was clear and warm, and was heavily scented by the many pretty flowers growing in the gardens about. I was glad it was so early, because it was

much easier leaving when there were no "good-byes" to say.

We checked in at the airfield, had our shots, and listened to a lecture on the "do's and don't's" on our homeward journey. I never attended one before any of my previous flights, and I could have done very well without this one. Crashing, or making forced landings in the briny deep, or on some jungle island had not entered my mind. Now, after being instructed just how to enter a rubber boat, being sure there were no nails sticking out of our shoes that would make holes in the raft, I wondered; especially when I knew I had ripped the heel off one of mine when jumping out of the jeep a short time before. I sneaked a peep at the shoe and lo and behold, there were a number of tiny heads showing where the lift had come off. "This would be my luck," I thought.

When I saw the beautiful C-54 with its four huge motors standing on the runway, I dismissed all thought of danger from my mind. Somehow or other, I felt nothing could possibly happen to that ship, especially because it belonged to the ATC. At 0900 we took off.

There were three WACs, several men in uniform, and one civilian traveling. Once off the ground, we leveled off and removed our safety belts. Now we were one big family sailing through space. Several of the men started card games in the aisle, others sat and talked or read. A captain sat next to me. He was on his way to Pennsylvania to spend a few weeks with his family. When I asked him if he were going to be discharged, he laughed and said, "I am not. Never had it so good. I've got two old

cars at home that I am going to take back to China. I can get them back over there for fifty dollars apiece and I know where I can sell them for \$20,000 each. I'll never have to work again after I get out of this army." Sounded good.

We arrived just outside of Tokyo at 1430. We messed and then were taken by two pretty Japanese girls to the officers' billets, where we washed and rested for a while. Then one of the girls and I went walking about the countryside. We took pictures of children in a small village nearby and visited shops where we purchased fans and obies.

At 2045 we took off again for Guam. This was going to be my first all-night trip and I was a little excited and anxious, wondering what it would be like 10,000 feet up in the air in all the inky darkness.

Once off the ground, and after flying only a short distance, I found night flying much more pleasurable in many ways than flying in daylight. I didn't want to sleep; the night was so exquisite, I was content with just resting. We seemed so close to the heavens, I found myself moving my hand as though trying to reach up to grab at a star. I watched them blinking and winking at me as though saying, "Don't be foolish; we are still millions of miles away from you." The moon made a perfect guide as we cut through the tropical air. I looked for the Southern Cross, but it must have been behind us; anyhow, I didn't see it because I fell asleep regardless of my efforts to stay awake.

At 0600 the next morning we sighted Guam just as the sun was coming up. To my dying day, I shall never forget that sunrise. The whole heaven was flooded with color and glory, and the island had an

early morning mist lingering over it, looking like a drape of shimmering silver net. The sun appeared like a disc of red blood coming directly up from the sea. The few cloud formations looked like lovely white castles made of spun sugar.

After circling a few times, we banked and the pilot made a perfect landing; just as perfect as a pelican would have made when lighting on the ocean.

We ate breakfast in the mess hall and then took showers. We had no towels with us, so used "johnny" paper. The day was warm, a little too warm for the way we were dressed. We walked about the island and talked with several of the men stationed there. They told us of the work being done by the Seabees. One boy told us the work was started forty-eight hours after the first American troops set foot on the island. They had a tough job because it was monsoon season and they had to work in the mud and muck day and night.

"Things are shaping up pretty good now," one of the kids said, very proudly. "We are going to have one of the largest and best harbors in the world. There is a gigantic dredging job being done and already there has been 8,000,000 cubic yards of coral pumped out of Apra Harbor, twice the volume of concrete used in the building of Boulder Dam."

I noticed one of the other boys was anxious to say something, and so I asked him if he liked Guam.

"I sure do," he said. "This is a busy place and it is going to be busier. Gosh, this island has five large air bases and eight completed first-class runways. Why, the Agana air terminal is as busy as the station at La Guardia Field in New York City."



One of the women asked him what he did in his leisure hours.

"Well, for one thing, we listen to our radios a lot. We have two large modern radio stations here. We also go to the movies and enter into all kinds of sports. There are 15 outdoor movie houses, 36 baseball diamonds, 125 softball fields, 200 basketball courts, 388 volley ball courts, 66 recreation buildings. There are also many boxing rings, tennis and handball courts."

One of the younger kids then spoke, "And you should see our beaches. Talk about Miami, Hoover Beach tops that place. First, the beach is much better; the sand is fine and white. Then we have the mountains to look at while we are enjoying the swimming. Best of all, we don't have the large crowds and no one ropes sections of it off with signs, 'PRIVATE, KEEP OFF.' Out here we have space to roam about and when we want to lie down and take a sun bath, we aren't bothered with someone stepping on our toes, trying to find a small place to put their wet, smelly selves."

"Gee," I said to Ada, "this wouldn't be a bad place to live for a while. In fact, I think it would be grand to live on any of the tropical islands we have visited." She didn't say much. She was thinking of home and wanted to get there as quickly as possible.

We took off from Guam at 2030. This time I sat next to a civilian. I was interested to know how he happened to be flying in an Army Transport Command Plane. I still don't know, but I did find out what his mission was. He had taken a cargo of shoes, dresses and coats to Shanghai to sell. He



was much perturbed because he did not make as much money as he expected.

"For heaven's sake," I said somewhat disgusted. "You should have found out what the Chinese people wear before you attempted to do anything like that. The Chinese are not like the Japanese. They still cling to their own customs in dress."

"I realize that now," he answered. "It did not pay me to do it, because my fare over and back cost me more than I received for the goods."

When I asked him where he lived, he said, "Brooklyn, before the trip to China. I don't know where my home will be after I arrive in the United States. First, I am going home and shoot my wife." He made the last statement as though it were an every-day occurrence to shoot a wife.

"You are?" I asked rather surprised. "What in the world are you going to do that for? Don't you know what penalty you will have to pay for that?"

"I don't care," he said, half crying. "Just before I left for China I learned she was going out with another man and, believe me, if I can get hold of him, I'll shoot him, too. I've been so good to my wife. I've given her everything she wanted. I can't understand it."

This was the beginning of a good murder story and I should like to know how it ended. I doubt very much if anyone were shot.

After we had been flying about eight hours, I looked out of the "peep-hole" and saw a long, narrow strip of land below us with many thatched huts and palm trees growing on it. There were several warships anchored in the lagoon. I pulled my camera out of my musette bag and was just about to snap

a picture, when the purser called out, "Hand over all cameras. No pictures allowed of this atoll."

"What was so important about that atoll?" I asked him when he returned my camera.

"That was Bikini," he answered.

"Bikini? What about it? I never heard of it."

"You have now, and you have seen where the atomic bomb is going to be tested tomorrow."

So that was Bikini. That was the small island inhabited by a few hundred people, living quietly and peacefully as they had been doing for years, where man's horrible invention was going to blow their homeland and everything within miles to hell. We knew what the atomic bomb did to cities because on August 6, 1945, Hiroshima with its 300,000 people was reduced to shambles in a very few minutes. Now, the American people were curious to know what would happen on the sea and to our ships. The very thought of it sent shivers up and down my spine. Good Lord, the war was supposed to be over. Was the world planning another one already and were we going home with thoughts that before long we, too, might be blown to kingdom come? It was plain common sense if we were advertising to the world we had the secret of a deadly bomb, other countries would get to work and have one just as deadly, if not more so. My mind was getting more and more muddled and I was glad when we reached Kwajalein.

It was exactly 1810 when we sighted the atoll. The sun was just setting, and I doubt very much if the greatest artist in the world could have painted the picture nature had colored so gorgeously, as we looked into the west that early evening. I felt sure

that sunsets seen from an altitude of 15,000 feet were more sumptuous and glorious than when seen from the land below.

We made a perfect landing and found that although we had traveled 1,431 miles, it was still Wednesday because we had passed the International Date Line.

Our stop here was only to eat and have the plane refuelled. At 0735 we were off again. Everyone found sleeping corners early that night. I was even too tired to watch the wonderful stars and moon.

Johnson Islands received us the next morning at 0800. Here we ate breakfast and rested. Then, once more we were on the wing for a journey of less than 800 miles to Hickham Field, at Pearl Harbor. Landing here was really a thrill. It seemed now we were home although we were still over 2,000 miles from San Francisco. It was hard to believe this beautiful, lush, tropical island was once the scene of the horrible Pearl Harbor disaster.

We had to go through the Customs here, but it took only a short time. Next, the most important thing was to get some real honest-to-goodness food. The Air Terminal had an excellent dining-room and, for the first time in two years, we were eating fresh tomatoes and lettuce. We asked for milk, something we had not tasted for over two years, but it was all gone. While we were eating, we enjoyed the soft strains of Hawaiian music coming from loud speakers. It all seemed like a wonderful dream. This was a place I always dreamed about visiting, and now that I was there, I knew I should return some day when I could stay longer.

Shopping in the PX sent us into great ecstasy; there were so many lovely things we could buy. And now with our new purchases, and feeling very happy, we started on the last lap of our homeward journey. This was going to be the longest stretch, but somehow or other we didn't mind how long it was, if we could see our good old Uncle Sugar when it ended. We knew we were going to be his guest for a long time.

I noticed that sleep was conspicuous by its absence on that last long trip. I sat in my bucket seat, wondering what each person on the plane was thinking. I figured the captain was thinking about the cars he was going to sell back in China. The civilian was probably planning the best time and place to shoot his wife and boy friend. The swell GIs were so damn glad to be getting out of the army, they could think of nothing else, I was sure. I pictured tennis balls bouncing in front of Ada; she was planning to become a professional some day. Rose was so excited thinking about Joe who was going to meet her at the station in some small town in Indiana, she kept singing something about the Wabash that no one could understand. Edith was in a pensive mood; she wasn't sure whether she wanted to marry her man. She would have to wait and see when she reached Seattle. And as for me, well, there was so much for me to go home to, I could hardly contain myself. A picture of each one in the family flashed through my mind. I wondered if they had changed any during the war.

We made a happy landing early the next morning at Fairfield-Suisun, California, where the Air Transport Command, Pacific Division, West Coast



Wing, 1504th AAF Base Unit was stationed. There was a tremendous number of service personnel there, and we were a little confused at first. The WACs registered at the Transient WAC Orderly Room and from there we reported to the Debarkation Section where we listened to a lecture on Rules and Regulations of the base. Next, we reported to the Surgeons' office where we showed medical reports, given to us prior to entering the country.

After our orders were issued late that day, we took off in a bus to a small railroad station a few miles away, where we boarded a train for Chicago.

Chicago is another grand city and one I hope I shall visit again some day. I don't know of any place in the States where service people were treated so fine. Here, all my flying companions except Ada said farewell to me.

It took a few hours before we got our reservations for Camp Dix, New Jersey, where we were to be discharged. Ada left there a day before I did and I never saw her again.

Dix seemed changed after three years, or perhaps I had changed. I found the personnel less understanding than those overseas. The officers still had the big ME written all over them. I'll never forget a lieutenant who worked in the supply room checking everything we had, to see that nothing went out of the camp except what was issued to us.

"Where is your musette bag, sergeant?" he asked after I turned in everything I had except that poor little insignificant thing I had carried nearly around the world with me.

"In my barracks, sir. I would like to keep it for sentimental reasons. I picked it out of a heap of



discarded ones that were ready for a bonfire in New Guinea."

"See your WAC officer at 1100," he answered. Then he continued as I turned to leave, "You'll have to turn it in when you are inspected before leaving the post, anyhow."

I reported at 1100. The lieutenant was still there. The WAC officer was busy. I waited around for nearly an hour and then the lieutenant called me and said, "Forget that I have told you this, but if you can think of some way to get that musette bag off the post without being caught, go ahead and try."

I went to my barracks and sat on the edge of my bunk for a long time trying to think of some way to gain my end. Ah! I glanced at the small blue cardboard carton in my locker. That was a very personal thing, something I was sure no inspecting officer would open. I emptied the contents and spent some time struggling with the musette bag, bending and folding it into a dozen different shapes before I managed to get it small enough to fit into the carton. No one would ever guess what was in it. Then I laughed aloud. It seemed so unimportant in a way, but I cherished it. The name of every place I was assigned overseas was printed on that dirty little bag by a native of each country.

After mess and a shower, I hit the sack early. I knew no one in the barracks and, somehow or other, even though I knew I was only a few hundred miles from home, I felt lonely and wished I could meet some of the WACs I had been with overseas.

When I first opened my eyes the next morning, I had a hard time convincing myself I was in the

States. In the upper bunk over me a pretty colored girl stuck her head over the edge and said, "Good morning, did I awaken you last night?"

"No, I just about died last night. When did you come in and where did you come from?"

"Around midnight. From France," she answered with a big grin.

I looked around the barracks and there were colored girls in every other bunk; all swell kids.

A group of us received orders right after noon the next day. The colonel who finally gave us our discharge papers made the usual speech I suppose he made to all WACs leaving the army, telling us of the hardships of civilian life and the advantages of remaining in the army. He said so much I had a feeling perhaps I was making a mistake. It was too late now to change my mind. When my name was called, I walked up to him, saluted for the last time, and in less than twenty minutes I was outside the gates of the separation center.

I felt lost. I was on my own now. There were no Army vehicles waiting to take me to my destination. No tickets thrust in my hand. There was not the feeling of security I had experienced in the Army; the feeling that no matter where I was, someone always knew. The realization of what the women meant when they wrote, "I am having a difficult time adjusting myself to civilian life," was plain.

There was just one other WAC in the queue waiting to buy a ticket to Boston. She was one of the colored girls I met at Camp Dix the day before. I was happy to have her traveling with me. Our train ride to Boston was a very pleasurable and interesting one.

I called my family from the South Station. It took at least an hour from Lexington to drive into Boston. Ann's father arrived to take her to Cambridge long before I left for home.

It was around midnight. The moon was shining brightly on snug, smug Boston. There was a cool, soft air blowing. I sat outside the station on my suitcase, waiting.

It was hard to believe what I was seeing: a city where buildings were still intact; no blood stains on the streets or running in the gutters; no dead bodies lying about; no beggars. Everything seemed in perfect harmony and order. People were secure. This was the American way of living.

I lost myself for a short time—a very short time. I took a trip—a hurried trip. I went back to the beautiful but fever-ridden, mucky, disease-infested jungles of New Guinea. I smelled stinking, rotting flesh as I climbed over debris in Wainright Tunnel and in dirty, dusty, bombed streets of Manila. I reached out to put food in small, thin, emaciated hands of starving children. I met Peter and his father who had lived in caves for months in the mountains of Baguio. The brave but poor people of Paranaque were waving to me. I was thinking of my smart, pretty hairdresser and the sick little artist cold and hungry in West Siberia. It must have been the noise made by the milkman's horse instead of the pattering feet of some poor, half-clad ricksha boy that awakened me.

"Hi, there," I heard someone say. It was my sister.

There was a grand reunion at home. Mother, Donald and two Joans were there. One Joan I had

never met. She made her entry into this wonderful but mysterious, bewildered world while I was away.

We had much to talk about. I asked about the neighbors. I asked about the boys who never returned and about those who did. I wondered if the mothers of the boys, who had been so bigoted and narrow before the war, had changed their way of thinking. Certainly they must have learned that their sons had mingled and lived with boys of other nationalities and creeds. Their boys must have told them of the Negroes, Jews, Catholics and Protestants living, fighting and dying together in New Guinea, Luzon, the Battle of the Bulge, and the many other hell holes of the world.

We talked and ate for hours, it seemed, and then I went to my room. It was clean and comfortable. Everything was as I left it, except for a magazine on my bed. I didn't notice the date, but I had not seen it before. I glanced at the open pages. On one there was a picture of a man, one of the leaders of a country, playing a piano with a chorus girl peering down at him from the top. On the opposite page was a picture of Buna Beach, showing three American soldiers lying dead on the shore where the sea had washed them in. I shrugged my shoulders, smiled ironically, and closed the magazine. Yes, this was America. War had not touched it, really.

I undressed and crawled into bed, but didn't sleep. I wondered where we, in America, were going. It was true the fighting war was over, at least in some parts of the world, but I was sure the goal of peace was still in the distance. I wondered why our "master minds" couldn't use their superbrains to invent something that would bring long life to the world,

instead of something to destroy, perhaps, even themselves. Why couldn't something be done to control the causes of war?

The answer is more simple than anyone would think, and yet, no one, living or dead, has ever had a mind masterful or super enough to give one to the world.







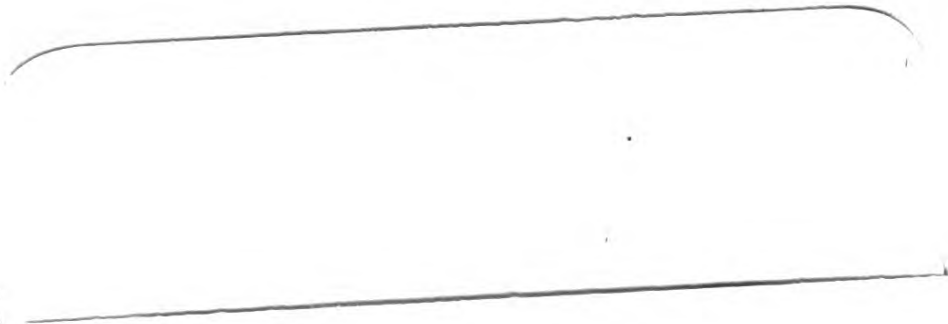
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